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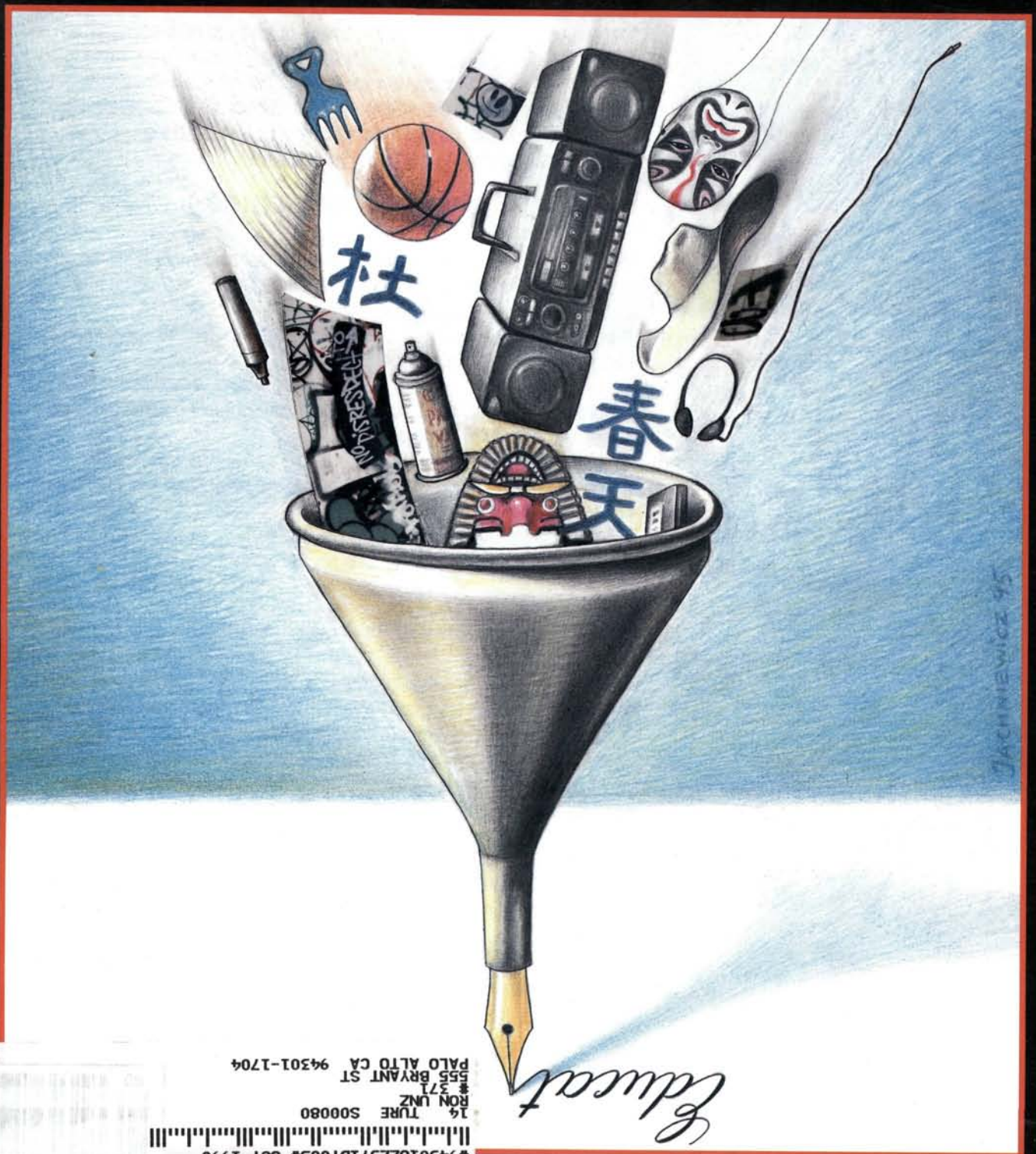

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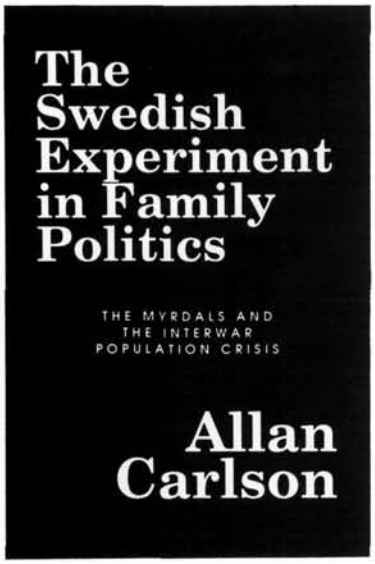

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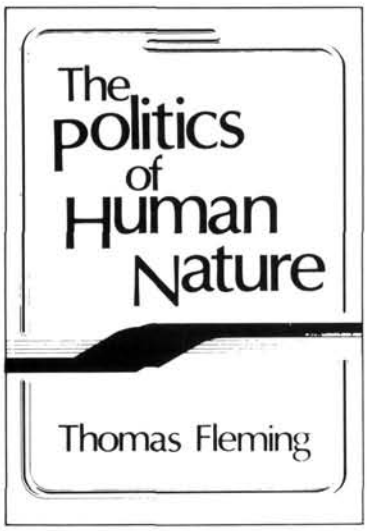

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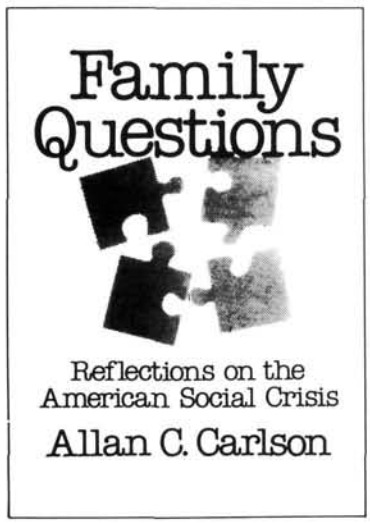

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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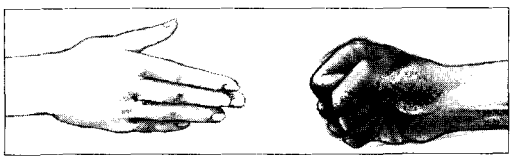

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Men vs. Women

Congratulations on your extraordinary May issue, "Men vs. Women." As a single, working woman in her 30's, I've been embarrassed for my gender for nearly two decades (though some comfort lies in knowing that actual feminists are in the minority, despite the press they get).

It was utterly refreshing to read level-headed assessments of the ravages of feminism on American society. I can use the word "ravages" with confidence, having five sisters who provide me with a living laboratory for observing feminism's real-life effects. The sisters who swallowed it are now divorced, embittered, and/or living the uniquely American horror of 16-hour days spent rushing from the office to the daycare center and to the mall.

—Terry Sullivan
Chicago, IL

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

DEAR SENATOR JESSE HELMS, I can only ask if maybe the press again missed your wry wit when they reported that you had called the rescue of Air Force Captain Scott F. O'Grady "something out of a storybook." I agree. It had everything but Lassie greeting the chopper. Marines landed 50 meters from him. (What miraculous precision.) Bosnian Serb officials claimed they captured the pilot. U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi says there was information the Serbs had the pilot. American military sources tried to make "third-hand" contacts with Bosnian Serbs through the United Nations. Then CNN reported from Bosnia that the Serbs had *not* captured the pilot. Hmmm.

Asked why it had taken six days for O'Grady to transmit to his NATO rescuers, Admiral Leighton Smith speculated that it could have been because of bad weather. Had O'Grady's radio been taken away by his captors and later returned after a deal was struck?

The media informed the public that the F-16C was shot down near Banja Luka. A parachute was seen 25 miles southwest at the Serb town of Mrkonjic Grad. OK, but our pilot was picked up 12 miles from Bihac, a distance of *60 miles from where he reportedly landed*. Someone must have given him a lift.

The storybook story seems calculated to restore faith in our top guns, to downgrade the danger our pilots face from the Serbs' air defenses, in sum to grease the way to launch an attack that will take us into war. Please call on me if your staff could use some competent advice outside the usual channels.

—John Peter Maher

THE PRESIDENT of these disunited states has been busy lately with his usual bait-and-switch tactics, ones which have made the newspapers more than ever exasperating to scan. Recently, the administration had three different Bosnia policies in one day, and the newly proposed Clinton budget was a split-the-difference maneuver that aped the Republicans. The President is hardly presidential.

He can't even run the White House itself, which, because of several attempts to attack its occupant (one kamikaze, several bullets, and no wonder), has now been further removed from public access. And in an exquisite display of complex and interlocking fatuities, the President has apologized for his servants, Secret Service officers who, greeting a delegation of 50 "openly gay and lesbian elected officials," wore rubber gloves on their hands. Before his apology, however, other protesters chanting "shame, shame" decorated the White House fence with scores of rubber gloves as they left the line of a Gay Pride Day parade.

In the first place, the original assortment of homosexual politicos had been invited to mend fences—they are one of the groups to which the President has pandered and which he has "betrayed."

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If Clinton had not been so brazenly manipulative in the first place, he would not have had to do it again. The President's attempt to destroy military distinctions early in his administration backfired, and ill became a draft-evader. But now the time had come to reassemble Clinton's rainbow coalition. And because of his lack of credibility, Clinton will always be suspected of connivance in the rubber glove incident, as he in effect gained from it both ways. The tricky Mr. Clinton has a way of making Richard Nixon look like Woodrow Wilson.

But beneath his burlesque lies the grotesque—the second place. No one should be invited anywhere, even to the White House, just to be insulted. The obligations of hospitality (a great theme of Homer's *Odyssey*) are a definition of civilization. Yet strangely enough, those "gay elected officials" were and are the last people in the world with a claim to be exempted from what we might call the rubber treatment. Mr. Clinton, in his apology, referred to "the inappropriate and insensitive treatment several of the participants were subjected to" and deeply regretted "any insult and embarrassment" that some might have suffered. This seems an oddly selective view of the matter.

For a quarter of a century, the great majority of the American people have been subjected unrelentingly to inappropriate and insensitive treatment and endless insult and embarrassment, by the constituency or even by the members of the delegation of "gay elected officials." If I may use the first person plural, we have been subjected to a great deal of the rubber treatment. I refer to condoms thrown at priests during Mass, condoms thrown at children, the attempted subversion of the school system to instruct in homosexuality, condom ads on TV endorsed by various Surgeons General—indeed a widespread advocacy of the homosexual worldview. To acknowledge that view in some way has meant to diminish any vestiges of normality and illusions of innocence. Childhood has particularly been a point of attack. The separation of sex from marriage has produced its opposite: the demand for legal homosexual marriage and adoption rights. The American people have been asked to endorse a caricature of the family, even as the family itself is disintegrating.

The homosexual propaganda machine, one allied with the most powerful organs of communication in our world, has asserted that a life of impersonal lust and the threat of HIV and other diseases has necessitated the intrusion of rubber in every intimacy—which will of course save the world, and not coincidentally demonstrate an equivalence between "lifestyles." Unfortunately, the news from the gay community, which should more accurately be called the morose lobby, is that the protection of rubber is being scanted in favor of romantic freedom. Something's in the air, and they're in love again, and the HIV incidence among young morose males is rising.

Well, all right then, I think that everyone has seen doctors and dentists and foodhandlers and others wearing rubber gloves and usually accepted it as necessary or even beneficial. So what's wrong, I'd like to know, with the Secret Service men greeting morose elected officials while wearing rubber gloves? They showed a prudence commendable in public servants. Their offense was to imply that self-identified homosexuals were homosexuals, and that the government's own propaganda about protection is supposed to be ignored for political, not polite, reasons. Besides, the homosexuality of self-proclaimed homosexuals is not supposed to be noted except by homosexuals when it is to their maximum advantage, and only then, such as at rallies attempting to extort money from the government or at Morose Pride marches, at which men with female breasts go topless.

Sad to say, even a handshake has been subjected to a paranoid treatment that's not without justification. The people who say that viruses cannot be spread by casual contact are the same ones who once said that the nation's blood supply did not need screening—that would be discriminatory! Precisely so. Today, in view of all the lying that has gone on in refusing to treat a disease as a disease, I would recommend that to prevent further embarrassment, *all visitors* to this White House wear rubber gloves. The Secret Service persons would be off the hook, and the visitors would be protected from the administration by rubber, as the government has so insistently recommended. If there were any hand-in-glove pressing of the flesh, no one would have to remember what the comedian Jonathan Winters used to say in character: "Put that down! You don't know where it's been!"

—*J.O. Tate*

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY and the University of Connecticut have come under fire from the United States Commission on Civil Rights. According to a startling report to that body from the Connecticut Advisory Committee last January, faculty at these two institutions in particular "resist efforts to diversify curricula and adapt to the changing composition of the student body and of the nation's citizenry." The committee recommended that performance evaluations of faculty members include "elements related to the ability to accommodate change." It specifically suggested that the University of Connecticut appoint a high-ranking official "to concentrate on multicultural and diversity issues and give appropriate weight to their consideration" and that Wesleyan implement "a clearer line of communication and command between the president and the individual faculty member."

If one reads through the pompous profspeak in this committee report, it is clear what the Connecticut Advisory Committee is proposing: faculty members should not be permitted to resist the multicultural agenda. Surely there are faculty members who are convinced that multiculturalism is the imposition of an orthodoxy on campus and who therefore oppose it. But if faculty performance is to be determined by an ability to accommodate change, then those on the wrong side of the orthodoxy will be writing their own pink slips.

Moreover, what does a high-ranking official at the university do when assigned the task of overseeing multicultural issues? Is he the chief of thought police? Must he force faculty conformity? Similarly, what does a university president "communicate" in this area?

In a way these recommendations bespeak an intolerance that is the direct antithesis of the civil rights they supposedly defend. Since when is the demand for conformity so rigid that faculty members should be penalized for disagreement and reluctance to accommodate change? At this moment many American universities resemble their Chinese counterparts in imposing a party line on faculty members for some greater social good. However, if universities are obliged to adopt a doctrine, then it seems to me the university paradigm will have been vitiated. What is the meaning of a university unwilling to accept dissent?

Diversity on campus is certainly nec-

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essary, but it is a diversity of ideas that is needed. A university may have biases, but it is not in the business of employing bias in order to adopt a soteriology. If students and faculties enlist in university life to be indoctrinated without dissent, then they become mere foot soldiers in an ideological war.

While I possess an ideology, I would resist to my very core the imposition of any doctrine on campus, even a doctrine consonant with my own views. Universities should resist the sometimes well-meaning directives by civil rights authorities who want faculty members to think "appropriately." Those faculty members who have resisted the multicultural juggernaut in Connecticut have acted appropriately.

It takes extraordinary courage to stand up to the diversity police on campus who have arrogated to themselves the tag of civil rights defenders. Yet that is precisely what universities need. If the tradition on which the academy is organized survives, it will be because some people on campus recognize the importance of dissent.

—Herb London

SODOMY AND THE LASH, according to Winston Churchill, were the outstanding features of the British Royal Navy. The United States Navy will be at least half-British, if the American courts have their way. The homosexuals' battle plan to gain acceptance, which includes taking dates to the Officer's Club, now involves 100 or so discrimination claims or lawsuits against the government. Their key argument, of course, is that forbidding a homosexual to serve is a violation of his civil rights. A corollary to the rights claim is that sexual orientation is not a reliable indicator of behavior, meaning that a declared homosexual may not necessarily practice what he preaches. Lawyers for the homosexual movement adopted the orientation-does-not-equal-behavior tactic only after the Supreme Court, in 1986, upheld Georgia's sodomy law by deciding the Constitution did not create a right to privacy to commit sodomy.

The case of *Joseph Steffan* v. *the Government*, the one case in which a court of law said homosexuals are not endowed with a "right to serve," shows what the Clinton administration has in mind for the military. Just before graduating from the Naval Academy, Steffan made the mistake of divulging his preference to a friend. Notwithstanding its ludicrous position on women, the Navy still officially frowns on sodomy. Steffan left Annapolis without graduating. He sued, won, then lost an appeal.

Retired Marine Colonel Ron Ray, on behalf of the Naval Aviation Foundation and Institute for Media Education, filed the amicus brief that sunk Steffan's suit. Using excerpts from *My Country, My Right to Serve*, a book lionizing queers in uniform, the brief details Steffan's sexual activities, shooting a hole through the argument that one's desires are not a reliable indicator of how one will act.

IME's Judith Reisman, a feisty grandmother and valiant crusader against sexual deviance, analyzed Steffan's interview with the author of the book and helped Ray pull back the sheets on the homosexual agenda. Steffan, she wrote, "engages in risky sex with anonymous AIDS-productive partners. . . . He copulates . . . without any control, as an animal in heat . . . [He is] the prototypical profile of the homosexual male. . . . His sex drive is . . . a large enough part of his identity that he risked destroying his own Naval career. . . . If Mr. Steffan would risk all for . . . anonymous sex, what else would one expect him to risk, when it would involve another's life?"

The brief's appendices are full of excerpts, again, thanks to Reisman, from publications such as *The Advocate*, the leading homosexual "newsmagazine." The magazine's "special issue" on military men, for instance, was quite open about the erotopathic obsession of homosexuals for men in uniform: "Picture a bare-chested young sailor in his whiter-than-white (and tighter-than-tight) bell-bottoms, working up a sweat as he swabs the deck. Kind of makes you break out in a sweat too, doesn't it. And war may be hell, but it's also sexy as hell when you've got three hot, dirty soldiers crammed into a foxhole made for one." Not surprisingly, seducing military men is a staple of homosexual pornography and personal advertisements.

Ray also revealed the two key sources of information for the Pentagon's study that concluded homosexuals were not a security risk: the editor of *Paidika: The Journal of Paedophilia*, and the famous "sexologist" Dr. John Money, an advocate of pedophilia. (One of the most damaging Soviet spies found working for an American intelligence agency was a pedophile blackmailed by Soviet agents, and it is no surprise that of the Army's 102 punitive separations for homosexuality between 1988 and 1992, 47 percent involved child molestation.) In *My Country, My Right to Serve*, where Steffan spilled the beans, we learn that the military "is heaven for a gay person."

Obviously, Ray argued to the United States Court of Appeals, orientation is a reliable indicator of future behavior, just as any other "orientation" would be. As Ray says, homosexuals "want you to believe that someone who calls himself a golfer, someone who owns clubs and shoes, is no more likely to play golf then someone who isn't a golfer."

Of course, the military has no legitimate need, such as a shortage of manpower, for homosexuals to serve. But even if there were, so what? The argument against homosexuals openly serving in the military doesn't turn on practicality. It turns on standards of decency and morality. Ray drew part of his winning argument in the Steffan case from John Adams' two-century-old military dictum, which Congress incorporated into the Uniform Code of Military Justice. An iron-clad law, it directs commanders to set examples of honor and virtue and to "suppress all dissolute, immoral and disorderly practices." That fundamental doctrine, Ray says, means President Clinton's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy is illegal.

But that won't matter. Spineless members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have implemented President Clinton's illegal order, Ray rightly observes, because "loyalty to an administration and its policies [have become more] important than loyalty and responsibility to [an officer's] own command." Instead, they tell officers disturbed by the new regime that they should resign. The Secretary of the Navy recently even decorated one of the more prominent homosexuals who still wears the uniform of his country. As for Janet Reno's Justice Department, which is supposed to defend military policy, its lawyers simply don't call witnesses who would support a case to exclude homosexuals. Rumors about Reno's own sexual orientation have long been rife, but in any event her lawyers purposely lose, which is why the courts have torn up the discharge papers of so many homosexuals.

Ray concludes it is "no exaggeration to say that moral principle may never again be decisive in a public debate." True, but then again, military and politi-

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cal leaders who would even discuss subjecting soldiers to degradation and disease have already declared moral bankruptcy.

—*R. Cort Kirkwood*

HUMAN FETUSES "can make your skin smoother, your body stronger, and are good for the kidneys," says a doctor at a hospital in Shenzen, China. In an effort to exploit this discovery, London's *Daily Telegraph* reports, a growing number of Chinese doctors are selling aborted babies to hungry consumers.

Frightened by the specter of overpopulation, the Chinese government has decreed that city dwellers may have only one child per household and that rural folk may have only two. As a result, reports the *Herald* of Glasgow, abortions have become a growth industry, with no fewer than 7,000 a year conducted in Shenzen alone. The upshot is a huge supply of dead babies for entrepreneurs seeking to make their way in the market-oriented environment of today's China. Usually, however, doctors who perform abortions just eat the fetuses themselves. According to the *Telegraph*, "Zoo Qin, a doctor working at the Luo Hu Clinic in Shenzen, said the fetuses were 'nutritious' and claimed to have eaten 100 herself in the past six months."

The doctors steadfastly deny that they seek to profit from the demand for fetuses. As one doctor told a reporter after showing him ten packaged fetuses, "We are a state hospital and do not charge." Noting that the journalist looked a little ill, he gestured at the fetuses and said, "Since you don't look well, you can take them."

The Chinese have also long enjoyed a good dish of placenta, and according to a separate report published in the *Telegraph*, they have recently resorted to eating snakes—namely pit vipers and boa constrictors. Americans might recoil from a Jeffrey Dahmer diet, but by legalizing murder, we have more or less decided that anything goes. In the 1990's, Swift's "modest proposal" has begun to look, well, modest.

—*Michael Washburn*

OBITER DICTA: Clyde Wilson, a frequent contributor to these pages, has collaborated with fellow historian Otto Scott to produce *The Meaning of Calhoun Today*, a documentary about one of the leading advocates of states' rights and personal liberty, John C. Calhoun. Dispelling popular myths about Calhoun, whom historians have slandered as a bigot and a kook, the film reveals him as a profound thinker as well as a man of great personal integrity. To order the $25 videotape, call (800) 994-2323 or send a check to Uncommon Media, P.O. Box 69006, Seattle, Washington, 98168. Also now available is a videotape of the Southern League's conference in Charleston last October, a meeting addressed by Thomas Fleming, Michael Hill, and Clyde Wilson, among others. This videotape can be obtained for $24 from the Southern League, P.O. Box 40910, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 35404-0910.

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Hubris

by Harold McCurdy

Elvis has shaken his pelvis
With wondrous effect, and wrought
In catamite and eunuch
Firestorms of sensual thought.

The priestesses of Sophia
Have drawn like carrion flies
Swarms of brutal playboys
To the nectar between their thighs.

At century's end America
Wallows in uncurbed sex,
And tops it off by severing
Sweet faces from swan-like necks.

Not yet has St. Walt Whitman,
St. Anthony, or St. John
Taught us the art of bonding
The rump to the head-bone.

Disorder is the payoff,
Disorder and disease,
And neither of them has brought us,
Penitent, to our knees.

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by Samuel Francis

Natural Born Kulchur

In the tumid political underbrush of the summer, there were a number of interesting and even important new sprouts, as Pat Buchanan slowly pushed aside Phil Gramm as the favored candidate of the Republican right and almost all of the rest of the blossoming aspirants to the throne of Reagan and Bush withered in the indifferent heat of the season. Neither Richard Lugar nor Lamar Alexander nor Arlen Specter attracted the slightest interest, and even one-speech wonders like Alan Keyes and certifiable crackpots like Bob Dornan produced only yawns. Mr. Buchanan's emergence as a serious candidate was due, of course, to the fact that he alone actually has something to say—about trade and the economic interests of the nation, about immigration and the nation's cultural identity, and about foreign policy and the nation's political interests in the world—that remains undreamt of in the platitudinous squints that serve as what most other Republican leaders are pleased to call their "visions."

Yet throughout the summer, Senator Robert Dole continued to hold the lead in public opinion polls, presumably not because of any vision he glimpses or has been able to share with his disciples but merely because he remains the most publicly visible of the announced candidates. It is to be expected that his commanding lead in the polls will begin to shrink as the campaign coagulates, but the Kansas senator was clearly determined to keep the lead, and the steps he took to do so provided what was perhaps the most instructive escapade of an otherwise tedious stage of the campaign.

His principal such step was his May 31 speech in Los Angeles about contemporary American popular culture, an oration that was barely five pages in length but offered intellectual munchies for the pundits for nearly a month afterward. Indeed, it was probably the most noticed speech Mr. Dole has ever given in his long career, and it may not only help him retain his lead in the opinion polls but also serve to nail his banner to the party's mast next year.

The main topic of Mr. Dole's remarks, of course, was Hollywood and all the wicked films and lyrics its corporate aesthetes have inflicted on us in recent years. The speech recalled Vice President Quayle's wisecrack about a television sitcom a few years earlier and immediately gave the pundits their cue to moan about the looming repression of the arts for which the Republicans secretly pine—even though barely a month earlier the exact same sages had wagged their beards in grave approval when President Clinton launched his own assault on radio talk-show hosts for inspiring the Oklahoma City bombers. Mr. Dole, however, is not Dan Quayle and knew how to handle himself. It was obvious that he was inviting controversy in a way that Mr. Quayle neither sought nor understood how to greet, and perhaps for that reason the savants who make it their business to protect the Republic from censorious philistines for the most part did not rise to the bait Mr. Dole so slyly offered them.

The speech was in many respects a stroke of political genius, since it not only gained Mr. Dole the headlines he wanted but also gave him what his main rival at the time, Mr. Gramm, had been unable to get—a credential as a spokesman for the moral and religious issues that today animate the passions of no less than a third of the GOP. Mr. Gramm, an economist by education, refuses to talk or think about much of anything but economic matters and economic policy, and as a result, when he persistently refused to discuss or support these issues after the social conservatives of the party persistently insisted he do so, he began to flounder. Mr. Dole therefore presented himself as a spokesman for social issues at just the moment that Mr. Gramm's failure was being noticed and before Mr. Buchanan could run off with those issues all by himself.

Moreover, Mr. Dole donned the mantle of moralism in such a way that he committed himself to nothing whatsoever, and this is a large part of the genius of his Hollywood speech. Never known as a foe of abortion, a champion of prayer in school, an enemy of pornography, or a drummer of the public virtue, Mr. Dole in his speech carefully contrived to avoid committing himself or the party or the government to doing anything at all about the evils he was denouncing. Never once did he insinuate censorship or even suggest that Americans who agreed with him should just refrain from going to the movies. His remarks thus gained him a solid reputation as a moral reformer without any commitment to any reform.

That reputation was immensely bolstered and maybe even invented in the days just after the speech, when the professional Christians of the Beltway sallied out of their cells to chuckle and coo over Mr. Dole's moral leadership. Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, fresh from his own rhetorical abasement before the Anti-Defamation League, saluted Dole's speech as "eloquent" and acknowledged that the Majority Leader was definitely on the right track to receive the coalition's imprimatur. Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council also praised the speech and came even closer to endorsing Mr. Dole because of it, while William Bennett was trundled out of his ever-darkening obscurity to add his own approval.

And indeed much of the praise was merited. Mr. Dole blasted Hollywood for producing films that dwell on sex and violence and for distributing lyrics, especially those of black rap groups, that are little more than the contents of their singers' lower intestinal tracts. It is out of character for the Majority Leader, a politician far more comfortable with building coalitions and balancing vote tallies, to talk about public morality, but if he's learned how, there should be every reason to support him.

The problem is that both Mr. Dole's speech about Hollywood and popular culture and the eagerness with which the Christian right embraced it point to what is really and more deeply wrong with American culture and actually help explain why the kinds of endeavors Mr. Dole complained about are so dominant. The problem, in a teacup, is that neither Mr. Dole nor his fans in the Christian right nor most of his supporters among American conservatives have

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the foggiest notion of what a popular culture should be. They have no such notion because the "visions" by which they have entranced themselves have no room for culture, and since no one else in the United States knows what a culture is or ought to be either, we are left with the morbid concoctions of Hollywood and the crippled musical droppings of Snoop Doggy Dog.

Mr. Dole's cultural preferences are evident in the films of which he expressed approval. While he condemned Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* and Quentin Tarantino's *True Romance* as "films that revel in mindless violence and loveless sex," a characterization manifestly not true about the latter film, he praised such masterpieces as Disney's *The Lion King*, intended as a children's movie but capable of providing morally salubrious entertainment for senators, and *True Lies*, a virtually unwatchable chase movie that has the strapping Arnold Schwarzenegger massacring people far more mindlessly than Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis in Stone's repulsive but carefully made film about two serial murderers. To be fair, Mr. Dole admitted later that he hadn't seen any of the films he was talking about. It might have helped if he had. Then again, it might not have.

What is really frightening about American culture is that the films Mr. Dole praised are in no way preferable to those he damned. The only objection he or anyone else on the American right ever raises to any film is that it "glorifies sex and violence," though even such blood-soaked epics as *Natural Born Killers* and *The Godfather*, which also drew a good deal of preachy wind from the right when it appeared in the 1970's, clearly do not. What far less bloody films that no one on the right pays much attention to often say about the nature of man, society, and the universe is often far more degraded and dangerous than a few scenes of improbable shootouts and bedroom wrestling matches. Mr. Dole praised *Forrest Gump*, a pleasant and sentimental tale about a wise moron played by Tom Hanks, but it never occurred to him to mention Hanks' performance in *Philadelphia*, a nonviolent and superficially decent film that is a protracted propaganda piece for the normalization of homosexuality. Mr. Dole expressed disgust for 2 Live Crew, but John Lennon's cuddly lyrics in "Imagine" about a world without country, property, or religion are far more subversive and far more influential. Lennon's fantasies of a one-world utopian communism are in fact the essence of what both the left and the neoconservative right believe today.

If it's really evil films you want, however, the "slasher flicks" popularized in the 1980's and intended to appeal to preteens and adolescents—Wes Craven's interminable *Nightmare on Elm Street* series is typical—are perhaps the most evil ever made. Their persistent theme, cemented throughout numberless sequels, is that evil is stronger than good, that the monster that appears to have been destroyed at the end of the last installment is really indestructible, and that there is nothing anyone can do about it. This theme is in fact the core idea of Satanism, but I recall no one among conservatives or the religious right remarking on this. For that matter, even downright wholesome movies like the *Star Wars* series never clearly distinguished the moral character of the heroes from that of the villains. The former are physically attractive, while the bad guys wear helmets and uniforms vaguely reminiscent of stormtroopers, but there is no clear explanation of why one side is good and the other bad.

In fact, the most violent films Hollywood has produced in recent decades sometimes offer the clearest moral distinctions. No director was more notorious for depicting graphic violence than the late Sam Peckinpah, but in *The Wild Bunch*, *The Getaway*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, and a host of other films, he drew sharp distinctions between good characters able and willing to assume responsibility for each other and bad characters who recognize no bonds or loyalties beyond their own greed and lust. For Peckinpah's heroes, it is the social bond—of an outlaw band, friendship, husband and wife—that makes them human, while for his villains, it is the denial or betrayal of such bonds that makes them evil. The same is true in Tarantino's *True Romance*, where the heroic characters are those willing to take risks and even lose their lives for wife, husband, or son, while everyone else, driven by greed, winds up literally killing each other. Of course, there's no reason why children should be allowed to see such a film, but Republicans might learn something from watching it.

But they probably wouldn't, and neither would the religious right, because in the United States the "official right" has little interest in anything that doesn't affect politics and the pocketbook. Immersed in an essentially hedonistic and economic worldview that recognizes nothing more important than material self-interest, the right is unable to form or even comment intelligently upon a culture, a normative way of life that transcends and shapes the pursuit of both power and money rather than being shaped by them. Hence, all that the right, religious or Republican, wants from culture is for it not to offend whatever habitual prejudices and tastes they happen to retain. The best kind of culture for them is what they think prevailed in the 1950's, when Pat Boone and Fabian crooned nothing that disturbed their affluent slumbers and Lucy and The Beaver reconfirmed every week the eternal virtues of an already crumbling nuclear family where the father figure was an object of ridicule whose authority was to be evaded and undermined.

Mr. Dole concluded his speech by quoting approvingly the words of Mark Canton, president of Universal Pictures. "Any smart business person can see what we must do," Mr. Canton remarked, "make more 'PG' rated films." But a culture consisting of nothing but children's movies is no more a real culture than Tupac Shakur is a real artist. What really smart "business persons" ought to be able to see is that when we ask nothing more of our culture than to be left alone to make money and run for President, what we will wind up with is exactly what we have now. ©

LIBERAL ARTS

LEARNING THE CLASSICS

Boxer Mike Tyson on how he spent his time in the hoosegow, from the April 10 issue of Sports Illustrated:

"'I read a guy by the name of Homer,' Tyson said in a television interview last May. 'And he wrote about a guy, Achilles, and another guy, Hector. And he wrote about that war.' If it hadn't been for the *Iliad*, the ex-champ suggested, prison life would have been hopelessly 'mundane.'"

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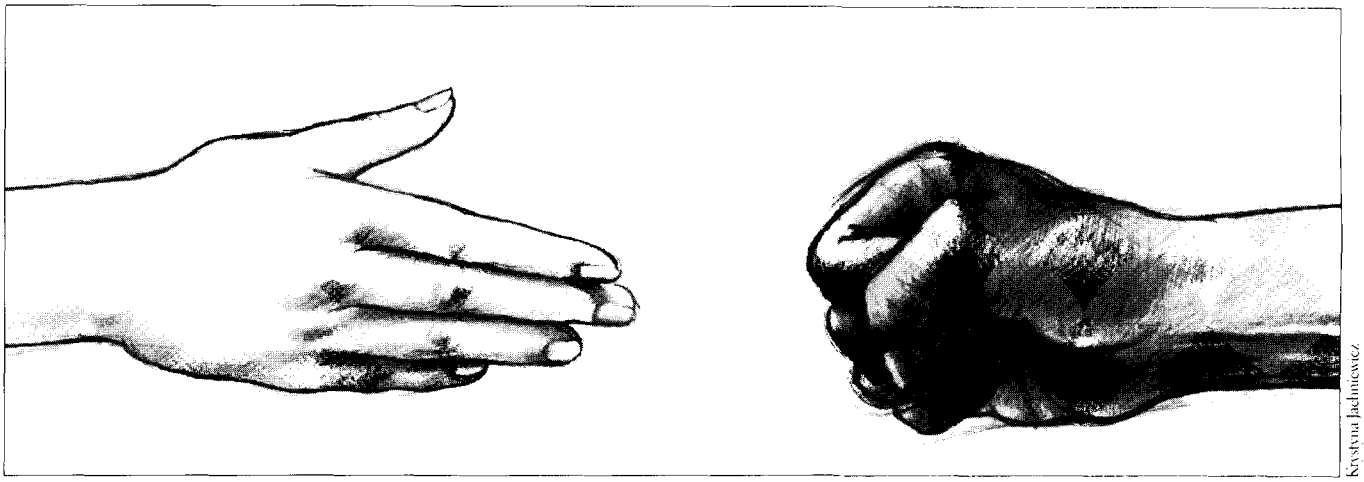

Krystyna Jachniewicz

Caliban in the Classroom

by Thomas Fleming

What do black Americans think of whites? What do they want from them? The questions are almost as baffling as "What do women want?"—the question we raised a few months ago. After years of living with the men and women we used to call colored people, working with them and calling some of them friends, I got my first real clue in the late 1970's, when I was teaching a Western Civ class at a black college. The syllabus required me to spend several weeks on *The Tempest*, and I was understandably nervous in discussing a play in which a young black male is condemned to slavery for trying to rape the daughter of his white benefactor. (I argued, without convincing anyone, that Caliban was supposed to be an Indian.)

As a Luddite I was inclined to make light of Prospero's magical gifts, and trying to ingratiate myself with students whom I genuinely liked, I pointed out that scientific progress was not everything, that Western man might use technology to gain the whole world but only at the risk of losing his immortal soul. Ringing the changes on the leftist cliché that "They can put a man on the moon, but they can't . . . ," I noticed some of the students getting agitated. When I asked what the trouble was, a nice young man erupted: "Man, you don't believe that s--t about the moon landing, do you?" He went on to explain that the whole space program was done with trick photography, "To make us feel small 'cause we ain't never put nobody on the moon." Unable to grasp his point, I hastened to explain that I opposed the moon landing, thought of it as a desecration, when others in the class joined in and declared that most technology was a hoax or had really been invented by blacks and then stolen by whites. Incredulously, I asked the students, some of whom were bright and hardworking, how many of them believed that the moon landing was just a trick. All hands went up. For just a moment I felt like the young professor at the end of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*: "I think I'm beginning to understand this now," he says, realizing that everything he thought he had learned of George and Martha's life story is almost entirely false.

It is only one little experience, admittedly, at an undistinguished black school, where the students were mostly part-time. Even kids who might not swallow the conspiracy theory were under a social pressure to side with their group against an alien. But in the years since, hearing "Dr." Bill Cosby (a bogus doctorate from an infamous program that gives credit for life experience) and other successful blacks expressing similar sentiments, I have come to believe that Afrocentrism, so far from being an eccentricity, virtually defines the perspective of black Americans at every level in society. Not long after my first exposure to (literally) this lunacy, I was teaching a Latin class at a formerly all-white college (desegregated less than 20 years earlier). Several of my black middle-class students informed me that Hannibal was "a brother," although the only evidence they could cite was a Budweiser poster in a series called "Black Princes of Africa." Cleopatra and St. Augustine were also black, and nothing I said could change their minds. The really stunning part was the insistence that all Western culture came from Babylon, the first great black civilization. I got so sick of hearing about the black Babylon—and where they got this from I shall never know—that I told one student either to shut up or leave the class. He left.

None of this should have come as a surprise. Pan-Africanists and black nationalists had been talking about the black origins of civilization throughout the century. In her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942), Zora Neale Hurston recounts the standard "great speech" she had been hearing all her life:

> Negroes were the bravest men on earth, facing every danger like lions, and fighting with demons. We must remember with pride that the first blood spilled for American Independence was that of the daring Crispus Attucks, a Negro who had bared his black breast to the bullets of the British tyrants at Boston. . . . It was a Negro named Simon who had been the only one with enough pity and compassion in his heart to help the Savior bear

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His cross upon Calvary. It was the Negro troops under Teddy Roosevelt who won the battle of San Juan Hill. . . . It was the genius of the Negro which had invented the steam engine, the cotton gin, the air brake, and numerous other things—but conniving white men had seen the Negro's inventions and run off and put them into practice before the Negro had a chance to do anything about it. Thus the white man got credit for what the genius of the Negro brain had produced. Were it not for the envy and greed of the white man, the Negro would hold his rightful place—the noblest and greatest man on earth.

Hurston's lifetime spanned the years from Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa movement to W.E.B. Du Bois's support for Pan African Congresses, but the Afrocentrist myths are at least several generations older. As Hurston recognized, "I did not know the word for it at the time, but it did not take me long to know the material was traditional." Some of the themes—including Egypt as a black civilization—are found in early 19th-century pamphlets, such as David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829).

How are European Americans to respond, either as individuals or as the still-dominant ethnic majority, to Afrocentrism? For scholars, the duty is clear. A fanatical regard for the truth, even at the expense of other virtues, is the defining quality of the true scholar. Not all historians, of course, are scholars; many of the best historians have been storytellers who shape their information into the myths and legends that define their people as a nation. (I would argue, if pressed, that this is the primary function of the historian.) But the scholar, including the scholar-historian, must say ultimately, "Let my nation be damned: I stand by the truth."

The refutation of Afrocentric mythology, especially in the superficially academic form in which it has been presented by Martin Bernal, has come not from political conservatives—how many conservative scholars are competent to discuss the question?—but from responsible liberals such as Emily Vermeule and Mary Lefkowitz. On the level of intellectual discourse, the scholars should have the last word, although I doubt that will happen. But, as I have already hinted, history serves more than one legitimate purpose. I have never particularly liked the kind of debunking scholarship that seeks to delegitimate the cherished myths and legends on which a social order rests. In general I prefer to leave such hooliganism to the rock-throwing Jacobins who deface public monuments and to the Muslims who burn books, decapitate statues, and gouge out the eyes of icons. Of course, where an iconography has been imposed by main force by an ideological tyranny, every sensible person wants to take a hand in tearing down the colossal images of Stalin or repealing the MLK holiday, but no sane man would attack his own nation's monuments, and no honorable enemy would refuse to respect another people's symbols. If black people by themselves wanted to honor Mr. King, or if Lincoln were worshipped only in the North, their white and Southern critics would do well to leave other people's national heroes alone. German criticism of the statue put up in London in honor of "Bomber Harris" is one of the fruits of European union. Such a protest is inconceivable in a Europe made up of independent nation-states.

This *laissez-faire* attitude is harder to sustain toward people who belong, in principle, to the same society and the same *commonwealth*. But this is exactly the point at issue: Do people who call themselves African-Americans really regard themselves as Americans at all? Increasingly one hears middle-class blacks saying, "I don't call myself African-American anymore, because I don't want anything to do with this country." But such an attitude is latent in the very terms Afro-American and African-American. Back in the 60's, when Stokely Carmichael was promoting "Afro-American," he was also making trips to Africa and reviving the nationalist imagery of Garvey and Du Bois, and Jesse Jackson, who has bullied the American press into treating him as a liberal Democrat, came up with "African-American" obviously by analogy with Jewish-American or Greek-American. American Zionists have been very successful in two ways that must have caught his attention: they have succeeded in influencing, even determining, American policy in the Middle East, while at the same time using Israel as a symbol around which to rally many Jewish-Americans. Jackson seems to have concluded that if Africa as a whole could be made to function as Israel, then he could be a sort of Norman Podhoretz or Meir Kahane, making state visits back to the "homeland" and crying bigotry every time an American majority does not cave into demands. As African-American leader, Jackson functions not just as a shadow senator for the District of Columbia but as shadow president of Africans in the United States.

Let us agree, then, my readers, that you and I shall respect the efforts of American blacks, including Mr. Jackson and Mr. Farrakhan, to redefine themselves as a nation. But let us also be clear what this would mean.

It is easy to ridicule Jackson's pretensions: his insistence on being given diplomatic status, when he visits Japan or South Africa, his presumption in entering into negotiations with nation-states and nationalist groups as if he were either a head of state or, at least, the leader of a national liberation front. Rush Limbaugh mocks him as a clown who cannot speak English—a strange charge coming from a man whose solecisms might have been scripted by George "Kingfish" Stevens. To underrate Mister Jackson is, as Clyde Wilson has pointed out in these pages, a grave mistake. For all the obvious flaws in his character—Chicago liberals still speak with genuine awe of the scope of his flim-flams—Jackson has a coherent and consistent vision of black nationalism. His apparent mistakes and gaffes are all necessary steps in a difficult two-track strategy to position himself, simultaneously, as an ethnic ward-healer who can deliver (or refuse to deliver) the black vote to the Democratic Party,

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and as a black Moses who will deliver his people from national bondage. His anti-Semitic outbursts, for example, warm the hearts of black nationalists who demonize Jews as the quintessential white oppressor, and his apologies and explanations—ignored by his followers—reassure liberals that he either knows his place or is only jiving. "Why doesn't he repudiate Louis Farrakhan?" ask his critics. Because Farrakhan is the most dynamic black leader in America, and even blacks who do not follow him into Islam respect him for his courage and for the terror he inspires in white America (according to a study by Michael Dawson, 62 percent of black Americans describe Farrakhan as a positive influence).

Recently I have had the misfortune of trying to get journalists and publishers to take separatist movements seriously. Whatever the subject—Southern secessionists, Latino or African nationalism—I am always told the same thing: these are small fringe groups that have little or no influence on most members of the minority. In some cases this may be true, but where there is a general ideology subscribed to by a majority of blacks or Southerners or Evangelical right-to-lifers, and where extremists are justified or defended by ordinary people, as Louis Farrakhan and Leonard Jeffries are, then you have the ingredients necessary for a nationalist revolt. Talk show hosts have spent the past six or eight months kicking around statistics that show that most American blacks think O.J. is innocent. "How can anybody be that stupid?" shrieks Roe Conn on Chicago's WLS. But it's not a question of intelligence. Blacks have been taught all their lives that whites have robbed them of their birthright. These arguments used to be confined to churches and political rallies, but now they are part of the school curriculum, and there are whole departments of Black Studies that teach nothing but the historical struggle between white demons and black angels. It doesn't matter if O.J. murdered two white people, because a) a black man cannot get justice in this country, and b) the "victims," as white people, probably had it coming.

Obviously, not all black Americans feel this way, but increasingly it seems that skin color is the only quality that matters in politics (where blacks vote solidly, 90 percent or better, for black candidates), in law (for example in the Reginald Denny case), and in education (desegregation suits have everything to do with color and nothing to do with educating children). How are European-Americans to respond? Most liberals are offended by any nationalism, including black nationalism: How dare they—Serbs, Southerners, Quebeckers, Christians, WASPs, blacks—cling to their particularity, their provincialism, their sense of who they are? "If they think they are different from me, that means they think they are better than me in some respect. Haven't they heard that all men are created equal, which means all men, women, and in-betweens are exactly the same regardless of race, color, or creed?"

Anyone who regards himself, however vaguely, as on the right will have the opposite instinctive reaction. He will exult in difference, will love women as women, honor men for being manly, and politely ignore the sports and freaks of nature and society that divide the hoof but do not chew the cud. He will inevitably think his own nation, however lowly and downtrodden, the greatest in the world, but if he is a man, he will respect, perhaps admire other nations, even his enemies, for their peculiarities. I have heard, time after time, from Serb and Italian soldiers—people who hated the Germans for what they did to their countries—that the soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* were the finest fighting men in the world, maybe in the history of the world. It is only Americans, uncertain of their nationality, who say otherwise.

Let us agree, then, my readers, that you and I shall respect the efforts of American blacks, including Mr. Jackson and Mr. Farrakhan, to redefine themselves as a nation. But let us also be clear what this would mean. On a trivial level, it would mean that Afrocentrism should be banned from schools and universities that are funded by a white majority. With a clear conscience we can say to black Americans: we are free to respect your identity and even your hatred of ourselves without being under any obligation to subsidize it. What are Afrocentric blacks doing in white institutions, in the first place?

But the same argument applies to affirmative action, welfare policies, and indeed, to all civil rights legislation. It is one thing to ask me to help my fellow citizens, no matter how fantastic or how remote the basis of their claims might be. The argument for national socialism—our present form of government—has always been that we as a people owe certain things to ourselves, such as a decent minimum standard of living, a public education that will enable every child to grow up into a productive citizen. But if American blacks are willing to divest themselves, even in principle, of their American identity, then they have no better claim on me than Mongolians or Somalis.

Let us put the argument in the form of a simple proposition: any claim on my pocketbook or on my sympathy advanced in the name of Afrocentrism or Afro-Americanism is self-refuting, and it will not be very long before black Americans who engage in this rhetoric will discover, to their sorrow, what self-reliance is all about.

I admire Mr. Jackson as the leader of his people, and I respect the desire of African-Americans for independence and self-determination. I only wish they would return the compliment. As Jesse Jackson so memorably remarked in reference to the Jewish Holocaust, "Other people have suffered, too." My father's family were Scots, from a nation that has suffered from the imperial and occasionally genocidal attentions of the English for over 500 years. If I have any time or resources to squander on ethnic liberations or social justice, I shall send my money to the Scots National Party and demand reparations for the "Tory" Scots whose property was seized by American rebels in the 1770's. Some of my people had to flee to Canada to escape persecution, and I cannot begin to describe the sufferings of the Irish, the Poles, the Armenians, the Greeks, and—most recently—the Bosnian Serbs.

All of these groups have suffered. None of these groups has its hand perpetually stuck out in expectation of a tip; none of them demands a special status because of its sufferings. Irish terrorists might blow up buildings and kill innocent people, but they do not wallow in self-pity or sue for the privilege of associating with the English. At the root of so much Afrocentric posturing is not the defiance of a proud people, but the kind of self-pity that invites contempt. In 1955 Zora Neale Hurston criticized the ruling in *Brown* v. *The Board of Education* with characteristic bluntness: "The American Indian has never been spoken of as a minority and chiefly because there is no whine in the Indian." Apart from a few "Red Power" leaders, there is still no whine in the Indian, and when there is no whine in African-Americans, perhaps they will be mature enough either to secure their independence or to live with us on terms of equality.

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When West Meets East

by Jonathan Chaves

Krystyna Jachniewicz

When Virginia Governor George Allen recently attempted to return the curriculum of his state's public school system to a solid grounding in Western and American history, his plan, greeted with howls of indignation from the National Educational Association and their minions in the state legislature, was soundly defeated. "It would set us back to the 1950's! It would ignore all we have discovered about how children learn in the last few decades! It would bring us back to Eurocentrism!" And so a popular governor recently elected with a solid mandate proved powerless to overcome the entrenched forces of "educators" and "liberal" legislators to restore the European and American tradition to center stage in Virginia's schools.

Those in professional educational circles who argue for doing away with "Eurocentrism" often point to the undeniable demographic increase in certain classrooms, including those in northern Virginia, of children from widely different ethnic backgrounds. On the level of higher education as well, many of our universities have experienced a dramatic rise in the percentage of foreign (the p.c. term is "international") students. However, it is not the students' background that determines curriculum but the categories of knowledge and the cultural expectations of the nation in which they are studying. As for the college and graduate students who flock to the United States from all over the world, they overwhelmingly opt to study various sciences, math, and engineering. If they wished to study Hinduism or Islamic civilization or Confucianism, they could obviously do so far more readily in their home countries. (One exception would be Chinese students from mainland China, where the presentation of classical Chinese civilization remains distorted by Marxist ideology.) American schools must teach, along with the basics, what it means to be an American citizen.

A more intellectually serious argument against Governor Allen's plan was the familiar cry of "multiculturalism." Underlying the call for a "multicultural" (as opposed to "Eurocentric") emphasis in education are two dubious claims, which ironically contradict each other: one, that because we in the West have ignored the great achievements of Asia (and other parts of the world as well, but here I am concerned only with the question of Asia), we need to redress this wrong by removing our blinders and fully integrating the history and civilization of Asia into our curricula at all levels; and, two, that whenever we did pay attention to Asia in the past, the West either denigrated or romanticized it. Both "strategies" of the latter were calculated to sanction or perhaps sugarcoat Western domination and even colonization of Asia, the "white man's burden" of Kipling. This is Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism," dramatically argued in his 1978 book of that name.

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It is unclear how the West could simultaneously have ignored Asia and studied it in minute detail with an eye to dominating it, but to our current generation of "educators" it does not matter: in the pseudoreligious, psychotherapeutic atmosphere of contemporary educational theory, both of these claims are legitimate and useful because they expose our guilt, which can only be expiated by means of new curricula. And yet the fact is that both these claims are demonstrably false: the first is obviously bogus, but the second, because it is more intellectually sophisticated, requires subtler analysis.

The history of Europe's interest in Asia is being systematically documented in one of the most ambitious scholarly projects of our time, *Asia in the Making of Europe* by Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley (University of Chicago Press). This multivolume, encyclopedic work began in 1965, and after reaching eight volumes in 1993 is still not completed. Lach intends to carry the story through the 18th century; Raymond Schwab terminates his massive one-volume survey, *The Oriental Renaissance*, one century later in 1880, and includes the growing fascination of Americans with Asia during that period (original French edition published in 1950, English translation in 1984). Anyone consulting either of these sources must emerge persuaded that at least since the 16th century, the West, far from ignoring Asia, was virtually obsessed with it.

In 1809, when William Blake exhibited a number of his drawings and paintings at 28 Broad Street, Golden Square, he included a picture, now lost, entitled "The Brahmins," and described by him in the "Descriptive Catalogue," which was distributed free of charge to all visitors, in these terms:

> The subject is, Mr. Wilkin [*sic*] translating the Geeta; an ideal design, suggested by the first publication of that part of the Hindoo Scriptures translated by Mr. Wilkin.

The "Wilkin" of Blake's lost drawing was in fact Sir Charles Wilkins (1749?-1836), one of the pioneering Western students of India's ancient classical language, Sanskrit. Wilkins also studied Persian and various Indian vernacular languages. While in India, as a writer for the East India Company, he cofounded the Asiatic Society of Bengal with the even more famous Sir William Jones (1746-94), the first scholar to suggest a relationship between Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, an hypothesis which lay the groundwork for the whole enterprise of modern linguistics. Wilkins' unprecedented translation of the *Bhagavadgita* was published in London in 1785; a French translation from Wilkins' English appeared just two years later. In 1793, Wilkins published "The Story of Sakuntala," which like the Gita was an excerpt from the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, and which formed the basis for the play by Kalidasa, India's greatest dramatist. Wilkins and Jones were not alone in introducing Indian civilization to Europe; in 1790 the Croatian Filip Vezdin published in Rome the first comprehensive grammar of the Sanskrit language, as recently shown by Branko Franolic in an important study. The labors of such scholars as Wilkins, Jones, and Vezdin made possible the establishment of systematic linguistics in the 19th century, especially in Germany, where the great Max Müller (1823-1900) issued his six-volume translation with commentary of the Rig-Veda, India's most ancient and important scripture, during the years 1849-73, and edited the monumental *Sacred Books of the East* from 1875 to 1900. This series, one of the great achievements in the history of Western scholarship, spread knowledge of the classics of ancient Persia, India, and China not only throughout the learned world but to considerable segments of the broad reading public.

The books produced by the scholars inspired popular writers as well, and in America none other than John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-92) provided his innumerable readers with what he called "Oriental Maxims," or "Paraphrase[s] of Sanscrit Translations." One of these, "Laying Up Treasure (from the *Mahabharata*)," shows how Whittier saw a common moral code underlying the wisdom of the East and West, a telling contrast to our current "multiculturalists" who take delight in pointing out the differences which they believe enjoin upon us a "tolerance" for moral relativism:

> Before the Ender comes, whose charioteer
> Is swift or slow Disease, lay up each year
> Thy harvests of well-doing, wealth that kings
> Nor thieves can take away. When all the things
> Thou callest thine, goods, pleasures, honors fall,
> Thou in thy virtue shalt survive them all.

But Western interest in the East did not mysteriously appear *ex nihilo*. Ancient Greek travel-writers such as Megasthenes, who is reported to have visited India from 302 to 288 B.C., were already discussing the doctrines of Indian "gymnosophists," finding parallels between their thought and that of Pythagoras (and thereby establishing the mainstream emphasis on similarities rather than the differences which so exercise our own "multiculturalists"). It was Megasthenes who provided the geographer Strabo with much of his material on India. Writing in 1883, E.H. Bunbury, in his superb *History of Ancient Geography*, observes that "it is interesting to compare the notices that have been thus preserved to us, with the full knowledge that we now possess of the philosophical and religious systems of the Hindoos [note that Bunbury is already able, in 1883, to speak of 'full knowledge']; and it must be admitted that considering the difficulties under which the Greeks must have labored in obtaining such knowledge, their information is singularly correct." Thus, already in classical antiquity, the West was gathering essentially accurate information about the East.

The great expansion of Western knowledge of Asia, however, must be credited to the Jesuit missionaries who undertook their heroic journeys to India, China, and Japan in the 16th through the 18th centuries. These men truly deserve the appellation "Generation of Giants," conferred upon them by George Dunne in his excellent 1962 book of that name. Dunne and D.E. Mungello, in *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (1989), fully document the Herculean labors of such men as Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in mastering both vernacular and classical Chinese, and in thoroughly immersing themselves in the Chinese Confucian classics and Buddhist scriptures to the level where they could debate Confucian scholars and Buddhist monks on points of abstruse doctrine in Chinese. It was the Jesuits, long before Wilkins and Jones, who provided Europe with the first translations (into Latin, and then from Latin into the various European vernaculars) of the Confucian classics which were to play such a crucial role in the thought of Leibniz, Voltaire et al. To mention only what was probably the single most influential such book, in 1687, Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1622-93) and Prospero Intorcetta (1625-96) coedited and translated *Confucius*

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Sinarum Philosophus, which was then rendered from the Latin into English by a certain J. Fraser in 1691 as *The Morals of Confucius, a Chinese Philosopher*. This book gave the West the first translations of *The Confucian Analects*—our primary source for the ideas of China's premier philosopher—*The Great Learning*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Ezra Pound would try his hand at this last work centuries later). Couplet and Intorcetta also discussed—and provided excerpts from—*The Book of Songs*, the ancient anthology of poetry considered one of the key books of China. Of this book, they wrote (in Fraser's English), 'Tis a collection of Odes. . . . Virtue is there magnified and extolled to the highest degree, and there are so many things expressed after a method so grave and wise, that 'tis impossible not to admire them."

Like Megasthenes before them, and Whittier after them, the Jesuit authors find an essential commonality of moral code in both the East and West. Their high admiration for the Confucian texts is manifest, their scholarship outstanding.

Did all this interest and learning translate into curriculum? To begin with, as Dunne and Mungello demonstrate, the Jesuit colleges at such places as Coimbra (Portugal) and Rome, to say nothing of those they established at Goa (India) and Macao, initiated training in the languages necessary for missionary work in the respective countries. But it is in the course of the 19th century that the serious study of Asia really starts to enter the curricula of various Western institutions of learning. According to Raymond Schwab, as early as 1805, "the East India Company founded Haileybury College in England for the purpose of training future employees in remote languages." These included Hindustani, Sanskrit, and Persian. Wilkins was appointed to the faculty. Schwab maintains that these classes were conducted "for practical reasons" (he accepts Said's theory of "Orientalism," and Said has in fact written a lengthy and rather turgid foreword for the English edition of the book), but it is hard to see what practical application the study of Sanskrit would have had for "colonial civil servants." Even here, one senses an element of pure, disinterested scholarly curiosity.

Chairs in various Asian subjects were established at European universities throughout the 19th century. To take only the example of Russia, E. Stuart Kirby, in his history of *Russian Studies of China* (1975), records that a certain V.P. Vasil'lev (1818-1900) in 1851 was appointed to the first Russian chair of Sinology at Kazan, and four years later to a similar position at St. Petersburg. Russian scholars had been translating the Confucian classics as early as the mid-18th century.

According to *The Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (1983), Japanese studies were being pursued at European universities beginning "early in the 19th century, for example at the University of Paris and the University of Leyden." As for the United States, Chinese was being taught at Harvard by 1870, and before World War II the discipline had expanded to Columbia, Chicago, California (Berkeley), and Pennsylvania, all institutions that continue to be leaders in the scholarly study of East Asia today (see John Lindbeck's *Understanding China*, 1971). A report on Japanese studies issued by the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1935 found that "25 institutions of higher education offered courses related to Japan and 8 offered some Japanese-language instruction." Harvard, whose Harvard-Yenching Institute was founded in 1928, already had ten faculty members teaching Japanese subjects alone.

All of this activity naturally resulted in graduate-level research, and Frank J. Shulman, the leading bibliographer of Asian Studies in the world today, has unearthed doctoral dissertations on Japan alone dating back as far as 1877. These include studies of Japanese porcelain manufactories (Columbia, 1880); flower arrangement (Paris, 1896); imperial court poetry (Halle-Wittenberg, 1892); theatrical history (Paris, 1901), to name only a few (Frank J. Shulman, *Japan and Korea: An Annotated Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations in Western Languages 1877-1969*, American Library Association, Chicago, 1970).

Far more subtly than those who complain about the West's "ignorance" of Asia, Edward Said and his generation of intellectuals recognize the long history of Western scholarship on Asia but castigate the West for its hidden agendas, including the desire to justify the subjection of Asia by Western political, economic, and cultural forces—in a word, colonialism. Although Said's main concern was with the Islamic Orient, his charges have led to much hand-wringing among scholars of East and South Asia as well. And that is a lot of hand-wringing: the latest membership directory of the Association for Asian Studies, the chief professional organization for Asianists, lists close to 8,000 specialists in various Asian subjects!

> If we repudiate a grounding in the West under the influence of a radical egalitarian ideology which holds all cultures to be of equal value and importance, and of equal interest to us, we will undermine the very ground we stand on.

And yet, at a recent conference on "Religion in Contemporary China" held at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., the leading Western authority on Confucianism in the world today, Wm. Theodore de Bary, publicly and refreshingly stated his disagreement with Said's view that Western scholarship on Asia has merely served as the handmaiden of imperialism and colonialism. He pointed to the work of James Legge, the late 19th century missionary who, like many before him, came to admire the richness of the Chinese classics; his translations of them, included in *The Sacred Books of the East*, remain standard sources today. And indeed there can be no question that such admiration, even adulation, motivated the greatest of the Asianists down through the centuries. Couplet and Intorcetta were praising the Confucian classics before the end of the 17th century. The near veneration of Voltaire and other philosophers for these works is well known. Indeed, Voltaire praised Confucius in a poem:

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Salutary interpreter of Reason alone,
illuminating minds without dazzling the world,
he spoke only as Sage and never as Prophet:
and yet he *was* believed, even in his own land!

If anything, it is clear that Voltaire wished to use the East as a club with which to beat the West! It is unmistakable in this poem that Confucius has been transformed into the living embodiment of pure reason, who never attempted prophecy. The real attack here, of course, is on the Church, with its prophetic and supernatural foundations, and thus by projecting his conception of the ideal polity upon China, Voltaire was merely repeating an age-old pattern. As Bunbury noted in 1883, Megasthenes and the other "Greeks were led to form too favorable an estimate of the state of society among the Indians, as well as of their moral character. . . . Thus Megasthenes represented the warrior caste as leading a life of perfect ease and enjoyment, when not called upon to go out to war, while the agricultural peasantry pursued their occupations in undisturbed tranquillity. . . . But this tendency to find a kind of Utopian perfection in any form of society widely different from that with which the observer is familiar, is an error of frequent occurrence in all ages. The flattering picture of China by Voltaire is an instance that will readily present itself to the mind of the modern reader."

Trying to Play It Cool at the Ice Cream Parlor

by Harold McCurdy

After the Bobbitt fun, a shocked shopkeeper
Fumbled the phone requesting "body parts"
Molded in ice cream for a bridal shower,
A pretty dish to set before pretty tarts.

The stunned shopkeeper stammered to his caller
He had no ice cream molds so up-to-date,
And earned, of course, her scorn. Bankruptcy followed.
He closed his doors, and joined the Welfare State.

Here Bunbury has demonstrated his superior wisdom to that of Said, his realization that far from wishing to dominate Asia, Western admirers of Asia from ancient times to the present (and we might include the "multiculturalists" of today) have wished to make Asia the standard against which the West is to be measured, usually to its detriment, whether that standard be so defined as to uphold the secularized polity dreamed of by the *philosophes*, to provide an alternative religious vision—as in the Theosophy of Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, and Henry Steele Olcott (or our own "New Age" aficionados)—or to inspire and sanction the aesthetic, even decadent luxuries dreamed of by Gautier, Baudelaire, or Rimbaud. We have indeed been in danger not of cruelly suppressing the Other, but on the contrary of becoming seduced by the Other, in an intoxicating narrative parallel on a more refined level to that of *Heart of Darkness*.

In a faculty meeting some years ago at my institution, The George Washington University, there was a lengthy discussion on revising the General Requirements for our undergraduate students. Debate occurred on whether the university should or should not have a "non-Western" requirement. Rising to speak against such a requirement—to the immense surprise of many of my colleagues, as I am a professor of Chinese language and literature—I lamented the fact that when my students read *The Peach Blossom Fan*, an important Chinese historical drama of the 17th century that dramatizes a range of responses to the traumatic fall of the Ming dynasty to Manchu invaders in 1644, I cannot draw effective comparisons with the historical plays of Shakespeare, because the students have not read them. Nor can I draw comparisons between China's great historical novel of the 14th century, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and the *Iliad* for the same reason. My plea was this: let us require the students to receive a solid grounding in the great classics of the West and in the entire Western heritage. Our own university and the whole system of higher education of which it forms a part is a product of the West. The academic freedom which allows us to explore the complete range of knowledge is a product of the West. The very enterprise of systematically and dispassionately studying another civilization, while empathetically entering into its aesthetic sensibility, historically has emerged only in the West. If we repudiate a grounding in the West under the influence of a radical egalitarian ideology which holds all cultures to be of equal value and importance, and of equal interest to us, we will undermine the very ground we stand on.

Of course, once that foundation is again solidly established, those who are interested will be encouraged to undertake the challenging, serious study of Asian languages and civilizations. They will then do so, because such study is and has been for centuries part of the noble endeavor of seeking knowledge as an end in itself, always a characteristic of the West, but also because in the course of encountering other religious and philosophical traditions, they will come to realize again, as did Megasthenes in antiquity, Couplet and Intorcetta in the 17th century, Whittier in the 19th, and C.S. Lewis in this century, that there are ultimately "Natural Laws" shared in common, constituting what Lewis calls, in *The Abolition of Man*, and using a Chinese term, the "Tao," a universal, normative moral code. Let the problematic of "difference" vs. "sameness" be resolved in favor of "sameness" on this level, and let the "multiculturalists" take note: the sins we commit against our ancestors will be atoned by our children. c

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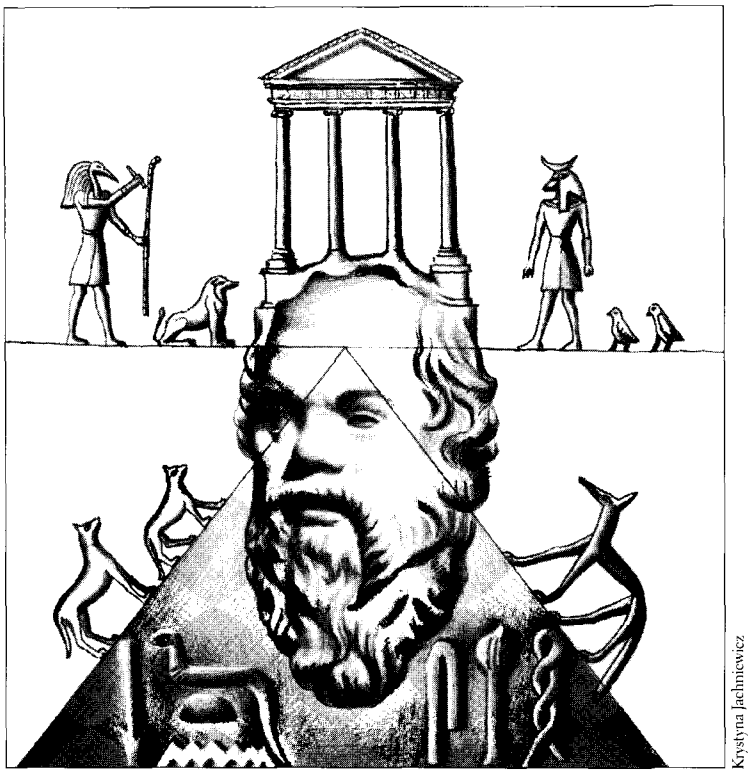
Not Out of Africa

by Mary Lefkowitz



Krystyna Jachniewicz

If radical Afrocentrists have their way, soon all schoolchildren will learn—as some are now learning—a version of ancient Mediterranean history that gives credit for the Greek achievement to the ancient Egyptians. The Afrocentrists contend that what most people have learned about the origins of Western civilization is untrue. According to them, the ancient history we have studied is a concatenation of racist lies designed to prevent the world from knowing the true extent of the African contribution.

The notion of a conspiracy of European historians allows Afrocentrists to make other specific claims about the past. They insist that the Greek people have African origins, and that Aesop, Socrates, Hannibal, Terence, and Cleopatra did as well. Even more importantly, they assert that Greek philosophy was Egyptian philosophy, that after studying in Egypt, the Greek philosophers returned home and passed off what they had learned as original contributions of their own. In particular, they contend that Aristotle went to Egypt with Alexander, stole books from the Alexandrian Library, and put his name on them.

How true are these claims? It is relatively easy to show that most of them are false, supported by assertions about possibilities rather than evidence. For example, the claim that Socrates had African ancestors is based entirely on the fact that he is shown with thickish lips and a snub nose in portrait sculptures. But these features are hardly exclusive to people of African descent. And certainly the comic poets would never have stopped teasing him about his foreign origins, if he had had any. Greeks, and especially Athenians, were always somewhat suspicious of people from outside their own city-states, still more of foreigners.

The idea that Cleopatra was black is also based on conceivable possibility. No one knows the identity of her paternal grandmother, who was her grandfather's mistress. Because her family always associated with other Greeks, everyone has always assumed that this unknown woman was Greek, either slave or free. If she had not been Greek, someone would have certainly pointed it out.

The claim about Aristotle is even more insubstantial. Did Aristotle really steal his philosophy from Egypt? Until relatively recently, no one ever thought so. What, after all, was the evidence to support such an assertion? No ancient writer thought that Aristotle ever went to Egypt, or had much contact with Alexander after he left Macedonia. Also, how could Aristotle have stolen his books from the library of Alexandria? He died in 322 B.C., and the library was not assembled until at least 20 years after his death.

There is no reason to assume that the Egyptians had much influence on Greek religion or Greek philosophy, until some time after 300 B.C., after the Macedonian Greeks had conquered Egypt and after the deaths of both Plato and Aristotle. After the Greeks and Egyptians had coexisted for some centuries, Greek writers became more familiar with Egyptian mythology and religion. But even then they seemed to understand only those aspects of Egyptian belief that corresponded most closely to their own ideas of the universe, and they expressed themselves in the abstract vocabulary developed by

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Mary Lefkowitz is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College. She is coeditor of Black Athena Revisited, *a collection of essays (University of North Carolina Press) and author of* Not Out of Africa, *a history of the Afrocentric myth of antiquity (Basic Books); both books will be published in spring 1996.*

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Plato and Aristotle.

Not that radical Afrocentrists are persuaded by these arguments, or any other arguments, just because they are based on warranted evidence. Perhaps 30 years ago arguments from evidence might have carried some conviction. But these days they are less effective. People no longer judge an argument on the basis of facts, but on the basis of cultural motives. These are the motives which are thought to arise from being part of an ethnic or geographical culture or subculture. Therefore, if you are a historian of European descent, it is assumed that you will naturally want to favor other European cultures. As a result, your account of ancient history can be regarded as biased by members of another cultural group.

Criticisms of this sort cannot be automatically dismissed. Some of them are even justified. It is completely reasonable to argue that the study of the civilizations of ancient Egypt and Nubia has been neglected in favor of Greece and Rome, and to observe that the Greco-Roman way of doing things is not always superior to the Egyptian. The Greeks themselves completely misunderstood the deeply spiritual nature of the Egyptian gods, who manifested themselves in different forms, including those of animals. The Greeks found such "animal worship" deeply uncongenial, and made fun of the Egyptians for the respect with which they treated certain animals, including cats. But considerable harm has been done to animals because of the European belief that only human beings have souls.

The radical Afrocentrists also have reason to complain that many European scholars have not sufficiently emphasized that the ancient Egyptians were an African people. According to Herodotus, who had visited Egypt, the Egyptians were dark-skinned and woolly-haired. His portrait of the Egyptians appears to be supported by archaeological evidence that suggests that Egyptians were brown-skinned and had dark wavy hair. Their gene pool contained both southern African and Semitic elements. It is probably fair to say that if a person from Memphis, Egypt, in 1930 B.C. turned up in Memphis, Tennessee, in A.D. 1930, he would have had to sit at the back of the bus.

No one should blame the Afrocentrists for pointing out that European historians have overlooked the question of Egypt's connection with other peoples on the African continent. Also, they are certainly right to observe that Europeans, beginning with Herodotus, have given only a disjointed account of the Egyptians' religious beliefs and practices. The problem is that the radical Afrocentrists are not interested simply in promoting more study of ancient Egypt, however reasonable that goal. For example, they do not point out that the ancient Egyptians distinguished themselves from the Nubians, who lived further to the south, and from the Phoenicians, Hebrews, and Philistines. Their physical characteristics were not identical with those of African people from whom they were separated by natural divisions of geography, such as the peoples of West, Central, and South Africa.

In fact, the radical Afrocentrists are not interested in ancient Egypt as it actually was. Instead, the Egypt they want all children to learn about is a distinctively Europeanized Egypt, invented first by Greek travelers to that country and later elaborated on by Europeans in the 18th century. Most ironically, the Egyptian philosophy that the Greeks were supposed to have stolen was originally Greek.

The earliest descriptions of academics for Egyptian priests, with large libraries and art galleries, occur not in any ancient text, but in an 18th-century French work of historical fiction, *Séthos* by the Abbé Jean Terrasson, first published in 1731. Terrasson's novel was widely read, and it had a profound influence on portrayals of Egyptian religion in later literature, and in works such as Mozart's *Magic Flute*.

Séthos had a particularly lasting effect on Freemasonry. Since 18th-century readers regarded Terrasson's account as basically factual, the Masons based their initiation rituals on the ceremonies and trials that Terrasson's hero underwent in his training as an Egyptian priest. It is from these rituals, and from the Freemasonic notions of their own origins, that the radical Afrocentrists derive their notion that there was an elaborate Egyptian mystery system in antiquity. They assume that the Greek philosophers came to Egypt to learn about this mystery system and that it was practiced at the Grand Lodge at Memphis and at other subordinate lodges.

But the idea of an Egyptian mystery system is an anachronism no less farfetched than the notion that Aristotle robbed the Library of Alexandria. There were no "mystery" or initiation cults in Egypt until the Greeks settled in Alexandria in the third century B.C., after Alexander's invasion. The "mystery system" in Terrasson's novel, which formed the basis of Masonic ritual, was derived entirely from Greek and Roman sources; only a few aspects of the ritual he describes are authentically Egyptian. The basic narrative is patterned on the experience of the heroes of Greek and Roman epics.

It is completely understandable that Terrasson relied on Greek and Roman writers. He had no other choice. Before the 1830's, when the Egyptian writing on the Rosetta Stone was deciphered, no one had access to any authentic Egyptian materials, because no one could read any of the Egyptian scripts. And of course the Masons, who do not pretend to be serious scholars, did not revise their rituals and notions of their own history in the light of the new information about Egypt that became available once hieroglyphics could be read.

Why do the radical Afrocentrists still maintain that there was an "Egyptian Mystery System," when in fact it has been known for more than 150 years that no such thing ever existed? The answer, in large part, is that they would like it to be true, because it gives an African civilization credit for the greatest achievements of human history, the development of philosophy and of scientific thought. But in so doing, they overlook the fact that they are assigning to an African people the primary blame for many of the troubles that they blame on European rationalism.

The notion of a conspiracy also has great appeal. It makes the history of Egypt conform to the later pattern of European aggression against Africa. It offers a poignant explanation of why Africa's intellectual culture has had only a small impact on the rest of the world. Since Egypt stands for all of Africa and peoples of African descent, it enables African peoples to regard themselves as innocent victims.

Because the idea of a "Stolen Legacy" allows peoples of African descent to take pride in their heritage and to feel morally and culturally superior to the Europeans who have persecuted them, the myth has a positive function. Ultimately, however, it will do much more harm than good. It can only increase resentment against peoples of European descent and widen a rift that is already difficult to bridge. But even more importantly, it should not be taught as history in schools because it is not historical. Rather, it is a form of propaganda,

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designed for a particular political purpose. It is not at all surprising that this notion of a "Stolen Legacy" seems to have been developed in the 1920's and 30's, at the same time that new histories of Germany and Italy were being written in Europe, and no one should need to be reminded of the harm that was done by the nationalistic myth of the Master Race.

The proponents of Afrocentric history ought to realize that they are giving carte blanche to other groups, of whose motives they would definitely not approve. If one group can rewrite history to suit itself, why not another? And in the conflict that will inevitably result between opposing views, who is likely to win? The loudest voice, or the voice with the most money behind it?

The only way to prevent such chaos is to stick to the known facts and to build arguments on the basis of evidence. Such a debate about the Egyptian and Near Eastern legacies to the West has been going on in the academy for more than a decade. Some of the discussion has been generated by the claims of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Western Civilization*. But even before Bernal published the first volume of his series in 1987, scholars had been reassessing the evidence.

The picture of the ancient world that emerges from this recent work is infinitely more nuanced and varied than the one some of us learned in school. Of the neighboring cultures, those located on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean, such as Phoenicia, appear to have made the greatest impression. That the Greeks were in communication with foreign cultures does not mean that the "Greek Achievement" was fundamentally the product of foreign influences. Rather, the point is that Greek writers and thinkers in different periods were able to learn from their neighbors. Even though Egypt had only a limited influence in earlier periods, new research shows that after Alexander conquered Egypt, Greek and Egyptian civilizations had an influence on one another, in literature and art as well as in philosophy and law.

Instead of concentrating on the myth of the "Stolen Legacy," which is in itself a relic of the European Enlightenment, Afrocentrists should turn their attention to the Egyptian influence on Greece and Rome during the period 300 B.C. to A.D. 400. Then they could make a historical case for an African contribution to Western Civilization.

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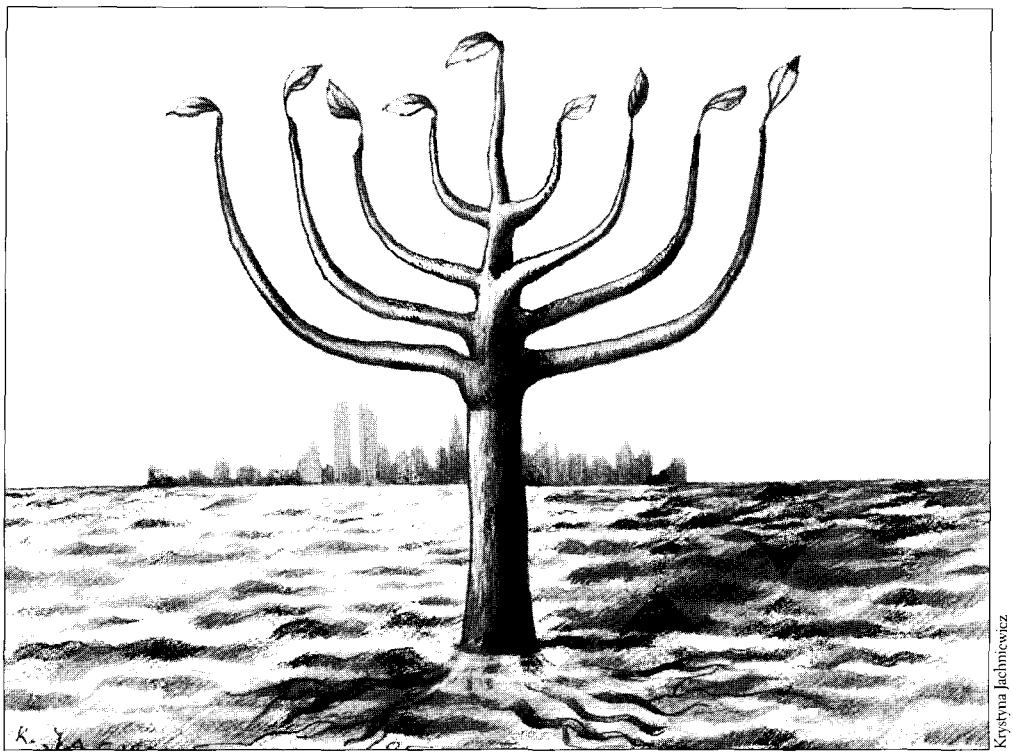
The Latest Jewish Ghetto

by Jacob Neusner



Krystyna Jachniewicz

Long before ethnicity became the focus of studying neglected groups and cultures—the black, Judaic, Chicano, and feminist counterpart to "We're here, we're queer, get used to it"—leading intellectuals such as Simone de Beauvoir, in feminist studies; Harry A. Wolfson, in Judaism as part of the Western philosophical tradition; Eugene Genovese and John Hope Franklin, in Afro-American studies; and their equals in Hispanic literature and philosophy, all commanded attention. They did not have to demand it. They earned a hearing by the power of intellect, not politics.

No threats of race riots created Genovese's chair at Rochester, and no affirmative action program opened doors for John Hope Franklin, who rightly would not be patronized. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* made its impact upon the course of learning; so did the work of Rosaldo in anthropology, and that of Helen H. Vendler in poetry and literature. The academy accorded the new humanities and the Catholics, blacks, women, and Jews who showed up on the scene in the early 1950's a serious, if not cordial, hearing. In other words, matters played themselves out. Ideas registered, special claims did not.

In the next generation, from the late 1960's onward, quite different models defined the role of the new departments and courses. Feminism became male-bashing; black studies degenerated into vile bigotry against everybody; and Jewish studies became an arena for special pleading. As a result, an entire generation of ordinary Americans grew up with well-grounded suspicion and contempt for once honorable academic fields, such as Afro-American history, the study of Judaism, women's studies, and the various other corners of the academy that today subject themselves to contempt and derision because of the vacuous character of their courses. "Multiculturalism" ought to have opened doors to everybody, but ended up closing the minds of anybody reached by these fields. Mediocre women, blacks, and Jews practicing women's, black, and Jewish studies, who could never have made their way in the scholarly world if held to the standards elsewhere governing academia, call themselves professors; others do so only with a snicker. They're here, they're queer, we're all used to it—and no one cares. The rigorous parts of the curriculum—math, natural science, engineering, logic, for instance—go forward untouched by charlatanism, and, as a matter of fact, only women study women's physics.

Take the traditional study of Judaism, for example, which came after the establishment of the study of religion in general. First came Christianity, with its ancillary subjects, Biblical Studies and philosophy of religion and missiology. Then came a specific religion other than Christianity, and in many colleges and universities in the early 1960's, it was Judaism. Since few endowments for the subject were available at that time, the departments made a commitment of precious resources, which represented a solemn judgment indeed. For until universities concluded that their cultural horizons encompassed the religious activities of humanity, Judaism would hardly have been a candidate for inclusion within the curriculum.

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Who made the decision, within the departments of Religious Studies, to include Judaism? In many cases the field was the creation of Protestant clergy, who moved from the college chaplaincy to chairmanships of academic departments, or who did not even move out of the chaplaincy when they took on the work of organizing departments. In other cases, philosophers of religion broadened their horizons. The founders of Religious Studies, encompassing Judaism, exemplify the breadth of sympathy among the framers of American civilization: white, mostly male Protestants, generally deriving from old American families, many originating in liberal Protestant seminaries, who so defined a field as to accommodate everybody and in theory exclude nobody. They were truly multicultural in sympathy and intent.

Why did they choose to study a religion other than Christianity? Since we deal with a phenomenon of the 1950's and early 1960's, we do well to remember the political tasks of the universities of that time: to prepare young Americans for the struggle against communism, to provide the intellectual foundations for this country's encounter with world politics. Isolationist before World War II, Americans had to learn how to deal with difference, to negotiate diversity on a world scale. Intellectually quiescent and hardly the center of world science and learning before World War II, Americans had to build upon the remarkable achievements in natural science and social science, to retool in engineering, and to reshape the humanities into a medium conducive to our country's encounter with its allies and potential allies throughout the world. Within that political setting, the academy opened its doors to formerly excluded groups, Jews standing first in line at what they conceived to be the prestigious universities; Catholics aspiring to draw their parochial system of higher education into the mainstream.

The founders of Religious Studies wanted Judaism to form the centerpiece for the study of religion in general, to reshape the field. They had in mind not believers celebrating the faith for believers (rabbis interrogating young Jews, as they commonly did in the 1950's, on why they ate pork or dated Gentiles) but qualified scholars, Jewish or Gentile, engaging students in the study of religion in general. And they believed Judaism could be a topic of sustained analytical interest, so that studying Judaism under diverse circumstances would be challenged by a new paradigm and a fresh episteme.

Twenty years after the academy had already opened the doors to these new disciplines, ethnic studies showed up on campus with their special pleading, their appeals to "our crowd," and their explicitly exclusionary program: black dorms, black professors teaching black students to hate whites, especially Jews and Catholics; Jewish professors of Jewish Studies teaching Jews to fear Gentiles; man-bashing 101 (as my daughter called Women's Studies at her college).

Religious Studies defined a discipline that encompassed Judaism. Ethnic studies, on the other hand, are inclusive topically but lack all disciplinary focus. In the former setting, a variety of data will come under study, and a variety of approaches to learning will make an appearance. In the latter model that the academy has now absorbed, all things Jewish belong together, but nothing Gentile, so that a major may comprise courses on American Jewish history, Job, and Maimonides, or six courses on the Holocaust in history, politics, and religion, and four courses on Midrash—or any other combination of matters that scarcely hold together at all.

We need not dismiss as merely self-celebratory or self-indulgent the formation of programs or departments of Judaic Studies, for when well-crafted as a meeting place for a number of coherent disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, such programs or departments may mount a strong intellectual defense of their work. But it is the simple fact that, at this time, no program or department of Jewish Studies may represent itself as disciplinary in its focus—let alone as interdisciplinary. The current programs may more accurately be classified as *non*disciplinary.

In fact, while Gentile students may enroll in courses in Judaism as part of Religious Studies, and Gentile professors may well offer such courses (as they often do in "Hebrew Scriptures" and "Second Temple Judaisms"), in the new Jewish Studies programs, the ethnic definition of the subject encompasses also the practitioners. As Bernard D. Cooperman notes in his essay "Jewish Studies and Jewish Identity," enrollments in Jewish Studies courses are low and getting lower: "Certainly we are failing to attract Gentiles to our courses." In disciplinary courses in Religious Studies, it is common for far more than half the students to derive from Christian or other Gentile origins. The prevailing premise in Jewish Studies is that here is where "we" get to study ourselves. Cooperman is explicit on the goals: "Jewish Studies programs aim at giving students the ability to participate in Jewish culture and contribute to it." A statement along those same lines on behalf of "Christian Studies" would exclude all but practicing Christians and therefore be unacceptable. So the difference between Jewish Studies and the traditional academic study of Judaism, the religion, registers keenly. Here is multiculturalism that in fact ghettoizes; it is *mono*culturalism. The counterpart to this is the black professor who teaches his opinion but offers nothing even remotely resembling scholarship. These "multiculturalists" are anti-white, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-everybody else and can only get students by making Black Studies a requirement.

"The salient characteristic of modern Jewish Studies," Cooperman continues, "is an intense and passionate effort to discover and delineate an authentic and independent Jewish society and culture through the ages. The field of Jewish studies assumes that, no matter how much Jews took from surrounding civilizations, they also addressed Jewish concerns in the terminological, conceptual, and often institutional vocabulary of the Jewish past. Demarcating the contours of this 'independent authenticity' is the cardinal task of Jewish Studies today." The contrast is clear between the terms and issues stressed by Cooperman and those that would characterize a corresponding statement about the traditional academic study of Judaism.

The ethnic model for Jewish Studies came on the scene about a decade and a half after departments of Religious Studies had included Judaism. How come? The powerful emotions generated by the 1967 war in the Middle East; the discovery of the Judaism of the Holocaust that has predominated to the present and reached a climax in America with the Holocaust Museum movement in every Jewish community in the country; the focus on Israeli politics—these phenomena deeply affected how Jews and Judaism were represented on campus. The highly intellectual, profoundly Protestant conception of religion and culture as masters of conviction, intellectual consequence, reflection and criticism, now met competition from an other-than-intellectual rendering of Jewish existence (here the

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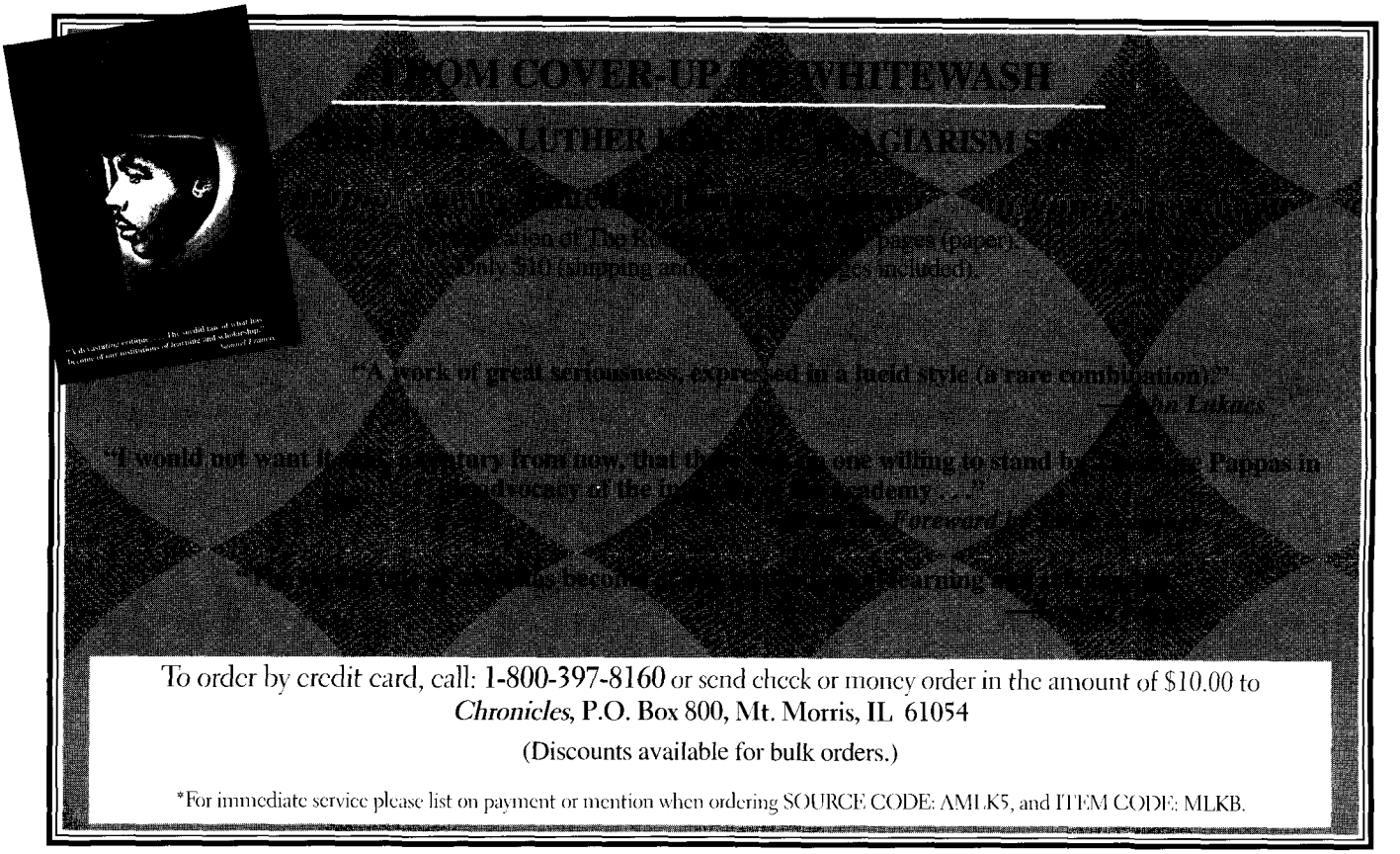
difference between Judaic religion and Jewish ethnicity is wholly obscured). Courses on the Holocaust attracted many more students than courses on Judaism. Ethnic history, seen as not only continuous but consequential for personal identification and conviction, enjoyed far more interest than those in the classical writings of Judaism. For the natural constituency of both types of courses, Jewish students themselves, brought to the curriculum these same powerful convictions on the self-evidence of the ethnic and the dispensability of the religious that animated the community at large.

Who paid? Blacks got their slots through threats and intimidation; Jews, on the other hand, bought their way in. Jewish philanthropists, likewise secular to the core, remarkably indifferent to the provisions of chairs in departments of Religious Studies for the traditional study of Judaism, brought millions of dollars in endowments for the study of the Holocaust, Jewish history leading up to the Holocaust, Israeli literature, Hebrew as spoken in the state of Israel (but not as written in the classics), and the study of the Jews as an ethnic group here, there, and everywhere. Not only could the disciplinary study of Judaism not compete, but departments of Religious Studies themselves, earlier prepared to use precious university-funded positions for Judaism, now accommodated the new ethnic definition of Jewish Studies. The *externally* funded positions would now sustain courses on the Jews that in no way pretended to compare with courses on Christianity or Buddhism or Islam *in those same departments*.

Yale's Department of Religious Studies, its home for Jewish Studies, has professorships in every discipline but that of religion: in history, Oriental studies, literature, but not religion. Brown University's Department of Religious Studies offers *no* courses on Judaism, insisting that the Program in Judaic Studies do the work; but that program has *no* professor educated in the discipline of religion at all! These cases are not extreme, but typical. The study of Judaism, in essence, is once again in a ghetto, matching the one in which it thrived before reaching the academy. When German-Jewish scholars of Judaism in the beginning of the 19th century aspired to form a university discipline and found themselves excluded, they produced outside the academy scholarship more than matching the profession's highest standards, whether in philosophy, religion, theology, or history. American Jewish scholars of Judaism in our own day have indeed found a warm welcome within the academy, but their enclave is a wasteland.

It appears that neither the academy nor the Jews welcomed the opportunity presented by the visionaries of the 1950's. The academy would make its peace with self-segregation, and the Jews would seek their home in an intellectual ghetto. Comprised of generalists, rich in opinions on everything but qualified by specialization in only a few things, and validated by no rigorous discipline at all, that self-segregated cell of discrete specialists found little in common in its own academic base, and nothing at all in common with the rest of the university.

Today, the academic and disciplinary study of Judaism takes place in the academy only with considerable difficulty, because the minority that values the academic calling finds itself scarcely able to compete with the sectarian and nondisciplinary study of the Jews. How Judaism will be studied in the future will be dictated by whether the academy recovers its own vocation, which has been, and may once again become, the task of forming a community of shared argument, about common questions, investigated through autonomous reason, producing results bearing insight beyond all special pleading and claims of a prior consequence. But whether the academy regains what has made it whole is a question that far transcends the study of Judaism. c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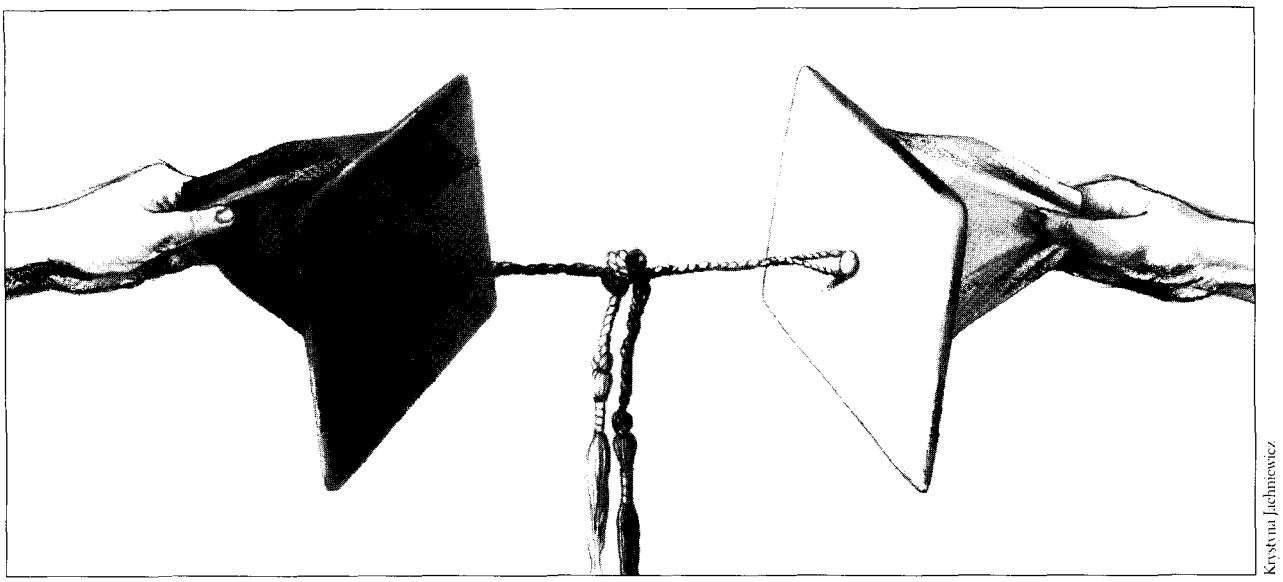
Multiculturalism in Theory and Practice

by Charles L. King



Krystyna Jachniewicz

I came by my lifelong interest in foreign languages and cultures honestly. My grandfather, Andrew Jackson King, Jr., migrated to a Hispanic-populated area of the Territory of New Mexico in 1906. Acquiring a small ranch, he hired some (Spanish-speaking) Basque shepherds and raised sheep—for a while, that is, until one morning he discovered that both sheep and Basques had disappeared, never to be seen again. From these shepherds my teenage father "picked up" what he modestly called "sheepherder Spanish."

Later my father homesteaded land in the same area (Santa Fe County), got married, and settled down to raise pinto beans (and a few cows). That's where I come in. Growing up in this bicultural environment—with a third culture, that of Pueblo Indians, nearby—I found that my Dad's "sheepherder Spanish" served him well in maintaining friendships with our Spanish-American neighbors. In my third-year high school Spanish class, I was the only non-Hispanic student, and by the end of the year, by making an effort to speak the language both in and outside the classroom, I had made a good start toward a mastery of Spanish.

Because language is the most intimate expression of a culture, I consequently acquired a real appreciation of Hispanic culture and of other languages and cultures in general. When World War II came along the Army sent me to the Philippines. There I tried my hand at Tagalog, that country's primary language. As one of the earliest of those sent to Japan at the conclusion of the war, I associated openly with the Japanese, impressing them favorably with the few phrases of Nipongo I had learned during my ten weeks in their country.

Returning from the war, I completed a B.A. in Spanish at the University of New Mexico and both a M.A. in Spanish and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. I spent several years working in Bolivia, Uruguay, and Colombia before going to Tehran as assistant executive director of the Iran-America Society, where I learned to speak the Persian language. From Tehran I went directly to the United States Office of Education in Washington, D.C., as a specialist for language institutes, and from there to the University of Colorado, where I taught Spanish and served three terms as editor of *The Modern Language Journal* (1971-79), the world's leading journal in foreign-language teaching methods and research.

All of which brings me to the subject of multiculturalism, and some reasons why I, after extensive time in six foreign countries and travel in many others, find so-called "multicultural studies" in our public schools and universities so disturbing. It is not what multiculturalism professes as its goal that disturbs me. That goal, usually expressed as making American students more sensitive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of their fellow Americans, sounds great. Who can argue with that? The problem is the yawning gap between multiculturalism's profession and practice. That gap reveals itself in the fact that by "fellow Americans" multicultural ideologues do not mean *all fellow Americans*, but only those who are members of the four officially anointed minority groups: blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians. The goal is not *inclusive* but *exclusive*; it denies or effectively ignores the vast cultural diversity of white Americans (who, after all, constitute 75 percent of the American population) by lumping all Euro-Americans together in a monolithic mass, as if all Europeans were alike—Churchill, Hitler, and Mussolini notwithstanding. Inevitably, it pits minorities against the enemy, the majority—as if *all* Americans of whatever background, minority and nonminority, were not Americans first, and members of ethnic groups second.

When I asked my parents in New Mexico from which racial or ethnic or cultural group I had descended, they replied:

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"What difference does it make where you came from? You are an American. We are all equal." True multiculturalism, or "diversity" as it is referred to in Academe, would at least recognize all ethnic groups, not just the four politically correct groups. University multiculturalists teach that these four groups are oppressed by the all-powerful, the politically dominant majority—as if minorities were denied participation in the American political process.

A Native American student at the center was recently asked on a Denver television program what she thought of the term 'Native American.' Her response was that she saw herself as 'a Native,' not as an 'American.'

When asked by Clifford May, associate editor of *The Rocky Mountain News*, whether "whites constitute a single culture or an ethnic group," Professor Evelyn Hu-DeHart, director of the Center for Studies in Ethnicity and Race in America (CSERA) at the University of Colorado at Boulder, answered: "No, whites constitute one dominant power group, if you will. It is not just about race. It's about power." It would, of course, have been absurd for her to have claimed that "whites constitute a single culture or ethnic group," but the rest of her statement reveals that her center effectively does view whites as one group (ignoring all the while that most Hispanics are white Europeans also). The center's primary goal is clearly political power, to provide a kind of "academic respectability" or gloss for the university's irrational affirmative action programs, not to mention the bilingual education offerings in its school of education.

I do not deny that all or almost all educational activity can in the broadest sense of the term be "politicized," but the kind of blatant politicizing of "education" such as we see at the University of Colorado's multicultural center and on campuses across the country is seriously undermining the academic integrity of higher education in this country. And by denigrating our dominant Euro-American culture, institutionalized multiculturalism weakens our national unity.

An example of politicization at the University of Colorado at Boulder occurred in April 1994, when for several days a small group of student protesters went on what they called a "hunger strike." They demanded, among other things, that the university create an Ethnic Studies Department with Ph.D.-granting power (or give departmental status to CSERA, which is a program, not a department). Predictably, the university's president, Judith Albino, played the minority political game by calling a press conference, capitulating to their demand, and promising to push for the creation of such a department.

The inevitably biased comparisons and contrasts of cultures that students get in ethnic studies departments or multicultural centers are fraudulent at worst, superficial at best. If a student really wants to gain a deep understanding of another national culture, he or she needs to learn its language, as well as much of its history and literature. This is the province of foreign language departments.

Multiculturalism is right in recognizing that we can all learn from other cultures. We should: that's what a truly liberal education teaches us. But multiculturalism ignores reality in the pursuit of that goal. It generally ignores the fact that the students' time is extremely limited; that they, whether minority or not, need to understand their own national culture *before* they can intelligently compare it or contrast it with other cultures; and that learning another culture is a major endeavor. It took me, for instance, almost a lifetime of earnest effort to penetrate Hispanic culture, just one of many major cultural groups in the world. And I was lucky: I was able to make a living doing it.

Multiculturalists generally fail to recognize that the United States is among the most diverse nations the world has ever known, and that Americans are united not only by a common language but by a shared common culture (largely derived from that language), in addition to a political and legal system primarily Anglo in origin. Our unilingual system has enabled diverse elements to assimilate into a common American culture, thus welding us together as "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Public schools and universities in this country have a solemn obligation to educate a constantly changing new generation of children in the history and heritage of their country. When I look at my own school, and especially at CSERA, I am appalled at its abject failure to fulfill its responsibility to American society. A Native American student at the center was recently asked on a Denver television program what she thought of the term "Native American." Her response was that she saw herself as "a Native," not as an "American."

If this "Native American" is not an American, of what nationality is she? One cannot expect multicultural centers to assume the responsibility of Americanizing students, but they should at least stop *de*-Americanizing them. Better still, they should be abolished altogether. Let the ethnologists in our anthropology departments teach ethnic cultures as ethnic cultures, not as a means of achieving a political agenda. And let history professors teach American history in as truthful, unbiased, apolitical, and comprehensive a manner as possible, history not revised to accommodate current political fads.

The danger multiculturalism poses to our national unity is also exacerbated by other powerful forces in our national life, such as massive immigration, legal and illegal, the highest in our history; bilingual education; bilingual ballots; the welfare state; and affirmative action (80 percent of our immigrants are from Asia and Latin America and, therefore, immediately eligible for preferential treatment in employment). These combined forces tend to separate society into competing groups, and at a time when our public schools have abandoned their historical mission of Americanizing students. This is nothing short of a formula for national suicide.

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Black English

by Nicholas Stix

Krystyna Jachimowicz

"Those is the niggers that was f--kin' with my sh-t." "I knew that nigger was one of the niggers I could rely on." The first speaker was a twentysomething "homegirl" from the projects, the second a drunk in his late 30's. Both were riding on New York's A train on different days and at different times. There was nothing extraordinary about their usage.

"That's 'transcendent' [black] English," said the young New Yorker, correcting her white professor, a 40-year teaching veteran. Faced with an error-riddled paper, the professor had sought to correct her English. But she denied his expertise. It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand.

From the end of the Civil War through the 1950's, accommodationists such as Booker T. Washington, nationalists such as Carter G. Woodson (in *The Miseducation of the Negro*, 1933) and W.E.B. Du Bois, and revolutionaries such as George S. Schuyler (whose pseudonymously printed, serialized 1930's newspaper novels have recently been collected as *Black Empire*) all were of one mind on the need for black Americans to become not just literate, but *super*literate. Black illiteracy was either the result of racial oppression or of the passivity of the "inferior" black masses. In any event, educational movements led by the "talented tenth" would teach the Negro to outwit the white man.

Approximately 40 years ago, black nationalism underwent a profound change, embracing gangsterism. The "Black English" ("BE," a/k/a "Ebonics") campaign, which began about ten years later, is a curious amalgam of black supremacists and the white "progressives" who patronize and fear them and whom the Afrocentrists hold in contempt. One of the motivations of the new, gangster-style nationalist leaders was the desire to erect a world mirroring that of the then-recently departed Jim Crow. In this world, no white adult would be allowed to "disrespect" a black child by correcting him; white teachers who did so were "miseducating" black students. After all, according to Afrocentrism, blacks and whites are citizens of different nations. Blacks are neither "Americans" nor "African-Americans," but *Africans*. The tag "African-American" was merely an intermediate step along the path toward total separation from everything American.

The argot described today as "Black English" is characterized by the constant use of street slang, obscenity, double negatives, the dropping of prefixes, word endings, and many verbs, and a lack of grammatical structure. The campaign to legitimate BE has been conducted largely through public agencies at public expense. With the help of wealthy, "progressive" white patrons, an upper-middle-class black insurgency imposed this idea on working-class and poor black children. Once it was decided that to be truly "black" was to be illiterate, promiscuous, and violent, it was child's play to theorize that a "black learning style" was characterized by "relational" and "nonlinear" thinking (illiteracy and innumeracy). Intellectual excellence was derided from the gutter to the principal's office as "acting white." Millions of black parents who insisted on their children speaking proper English and doing their homework suddenly found themselves up against a formidable opponent—the state.

Some whites are willing to rationalize away all black educational failure. As a socialist political operative in New York confided to me during the 1988 Tawana Brawley hoax, "You can't expect blacks to participate as equals in public discourse." This is typical of such humanitarian racism. In fact, many progressives are so afraid of being called racists by blacks that they take

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the initiative in labeling any whites holding blacks to standards as "racists."

The cultural split among blacks is between those who see gutter language as "liberating" and those who privately call it "slave talk." However, public debate is limited by the commandment, "Thou shalt not criticize a brother or sister in front of *them*." And the black nationalists who so delight in giving it to the "white devils" will call any black breaking ranks an "Oreo," "Rent-a-Tom," "allegedly Black person," "Negro," etc. That is, when they are not letting their fists do their talking.

Fortunately, I have yet to run into a black student who corrects my attempts at improving his work. (I had a close call with one hostile student, but before he could erupt, the police suddenly showed up and arrested him during a class. I never saw him again.) I have had black students go beyond the countless copy editing and proofreading corrections I impose on all students, to fix phrasing I had left untouched. One young woman had used some street slang—"their no good, sorry ass selves"—which I found charming. By letting the slang pass, I had patronized her. It had no business in a philosophy paper. All the same, she took it upon herself to delete the slang in a later version.

The theory that American blacks speak a language of their own gained public notice during the early 1970's. In *Black English* (1971), J.L. Dillard expounded the first systematic theory, while Geneva Smitherman, John Langston Gwaltney, and Molefi Kete Asante, among others, have since discoursed on the subject. In general, they oppose the older notion that American black English presents dialects of American English. BE's central thesis, that blacks and whites speak *different languages*, equivocates on the distinction between "language" and "dialect." By the same logic, Bavarians could argue that they do not speak a German dialect, but rather a separate language. Such a logic of exceptionalism could then be extended to every dialect of every language, just as many ethnic groups in the world today demand recognition as separate "nations."

The examples of BE offered by Dillard (and to a lesser extent by Gwaltney) have the flavor of uneducated, poor, rural blacks, in a style more reminiscent of black Americans in 1871 than in 1971. Such pastoral romanticism must ignore the kinship between the English of poor, illiterate Southern blacks and that of their white counterparts. Smitherman's examples, on the other hand, are more contemporary and urban. Her compendium of idiomatic phrases, not all of which are clearly black in origin, are colorful when used by accomplished speakers. However, today's average black is no more accomplished at speaking than the average white.

A mixture of moralism and pseudoscience pervades works such as *Afrocentricity* and *Kemet, Afrocentricity & Knowledge* by Molefi Kete Asante (formerly Arthur Smith)—the "godfather" of Afrocentrism and chairman of Temple University's Black Studies Department—and *Drylongso* by John Langston Gwaltney. Although Gwaltney is a professor of anthropology, *Drylongso* is less an examination of than a piece of instant folklore. The blind Gwaltney apparently fancies himself a "seer" in the African tradition of the "griot"; thus it would be disrespectful to question his authority. He gives the impression that he conducts his research by wandering from African village to village as a native wise man, but the truth is that his interviews were carried out in America! All he will tell us is that his research occurred during the early 1970's. Gwaltney changes the names of his informants, whom he tells us were all relatives and lifelong friends, and refuses to divulge the locations of his interviews.

Gwaltney's book is full of normative judgments as to what constitutes a "core good black person," along with a glossary of BE terms. Written exclusively with white patronage, the work was obviously intended for a white audience. Otherwise, why include a glossary of terms every black would know? Except that many would not. For instance, the term "ofay" is defined as meaning "white." This is true, but only in the same sense in which "nigger" means "black." Before it fell into disuse approximately 30 years ago, "ofay" was the most derogatory term a black could use in speaking of a white.

Other glossary entries are mutilated, given an exotic, patois-like sound like that of Cajun or Haitian Creole. For example, the flat consonant "lingua-alveolar" sounds (e.g., "t" and "d" sounds), made by the conjunction of tongue and gum ridge and associated with English and German, are changed to "bilabial" (two lip) sounds with a more French feel. Thus, the street term "diddley squat," or "diddley" for short, becomes the exotic-sounding "doodlee-squa." "Diddley squat" means "anything," "nothing," or "sh-t," as in "They don't pay diddley."

The purpose of such mystification is to invent an exoticism that black American culture supposedly lacks. In a revealing essay 20 years ago—"If Black English isn't a Language, What is?"—the late James Baldwin dropped all pretenses to scholarship or logic, arguing that American blacks' history of enslavement and discrimination entitled them to see black English as a real language, linguistic criteria be damned.

All BE theories rest on the assumption that General American Speech (GAS) is "what white folks speak." Anyone who has ever tried to teach English to white students of any age knows how wrong that premise is. GAS is a normative ideal; the average white speaks a shameful parody of good English. If things were otherwise, predominantly white colleges could shut down their "white English" writing programs.

If we take the explicit claims of BE advocates seriously, no white professor may teach black students. For he cannot possibly understand them, and they cannot possibly understand him. Yet, most black students obviously *do* understand their white instructors. Here the theory switches from the empirical to the normative. The principle of BE is that black students *should not* understand their white professors.

Presuming, as the theory suggests, that only blacks may teach black students, what would a BE writing class look like? Would the black professor instruct students on the "proper" use of the double negative, the "right" way to misspell, and how "appropriately" to drop prefixes, word endings, and many verbs? BE's advocates claim to be positing an empirical theory of how blacks *do* in fact speak. Treating it rather as a theory of how blacks *should* speak demystifies its empirical claims.

BE arose as a strategy within urban welfare politics, when in the late 1960's radical black student leaders and their white Marxist supporters demanded an immediate elimination of all barriers to the admission of unqualified black students not only to community colleges, but to previously selective (in the case of City College of New York, highly selective) four-year public schools. They demanded Black Studies programs with unlettered but radical directors and instructors (no whites need apply) to be chosen by "the community"; the granting of full faculty rank to unqualified staff members; and the introduc-

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tion of remedial classes at the institutions in question. The hardy souls among professors, administrators, or students who dared stand up to the thugs were derided as "racists" or "sell-outs" and often physically assaulted.

Though the militants achieved only a portion of their demands, they did get intellectually fraudulent, "autonomous" Black Studies programs as political payoffs. The original plans for courses on "black" subjects within legitimate disciplines were soon trashed, in favor of separatist programs, barring white instructors. Washington's nascent, ill-fated Federal City College at first openly barred white students from Black Studies, but admitted them when it became clear that the numbers of black students interested in the program were insufficient to justify its budget request.

Leonard Jeffries was named chairman of City College's program with a knowledge only of the politics of the Ivory Coast and no publications to his credit. At the time, many of Jeffries' peers were even less qualified. Psychologist Nathan Hare was named director of the Black Studies program at San Francisco State College simply because black nationalist students demanded it. Hare's chief qualification was that he had recently been fired by America's leading black school, Howard University, for being a perpetual troublemaker. In 1968, Washington's Federal City College hired 25-year-old English instructor James Garrett. A playwright with only a bachelor's degree and no research on black history, Garrett's hatred of whites presumably compensated for his educational deficiencies. As Irene Tinker reported in 1973, Garrett saw a separate Black Studies program as serving the goals of "revolution and nation-building." One of his Federal City memos read, in part, "Black people are not western. They are westernized. In much the same way as one might get simonized. We are painted over with whiteness. . . . If you think that you can go to school and get what you call an education and feel that you will not have to pick up the gun one day to protect your life from these pigs and the rulers of the pigs and the rulers of the rulers of the pigs (those are the top pigs). . . "—you get the idea. The theory of "Black English" was simply an expedient extension of this gangster-style black separatism.

To test the veracity of BE as an empirical hypothesis, a black student need only attend a school in the "black Ivy League"—colleges of, by, and for black Americans, say Howard or Fiske University, or Spelman or Morehouse College. He should try using "Black English" in his essays for these black professors. Or upon graduating, he should try writing "black" for the black "slicks"—*Ebony, Essence, Jet*, etc.—written by, for, and about blacks. In either case, he would be tossed out on his ear.

"Black English" is clearly a strategy for dealing with whites in predominantly white institutions. In positing an insurmountable inability on the part of whites to understand blacks, it is stronger than the fashionable "insensitivity" thesis. Ultimately, though, as with all Afrocentrism, BE requires a constant state of exception: black nationalists are to be freed from the rules of logic, evidence, and ethics, and the findings of linguistics and biology. Defending BE involves constantly lying in one's dealings with whites—not unlike the way many whites lie in their dealings with blacks.

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A 1930 Grad Revisits His Alma Mater

by Harold McCurdy

Measure for Measure slam-dunked on its head,
Lucio now truth-telling, the Duke a fraud
Guilty of humping Mistress O., the bawd,
And other failings Shakespeare left unsaid,

The feminist director reaps applause
For undergraduates bounding across the stage
In the chaotic license of their Age
Sanctioned by deconstruction's popular Laws.

And Shakespeare is, and his good Duke, forgotten,
The Duke of godly mind, forgiving all
Who, being human, like Lucio, fall
Too much in love with everything that's rotten.

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Babylon Revisited

by J.O. Tate

"When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as Europe."

—Thomas Jefferson

Krystyna Jachniewicz

Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920's
by Ann Douglas
New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; 606 pp., $27.50

◆

This snowball of a book, gathering mass as it accelerates, is studded with accretions and revisions. A work of cultural criticism rather than of mere literary or even social history, it seems to make its own rules as it goes. You might say that it is about everything, and that is the best thing you could say about it—and the worst.

Perhaps we have seen this kind of book before. There have been volumes devoted to Paris and London and Vienna, as I recall, that take some of Professor Douglas's liberties in asserting that a certain city at a certain period was where and when modernism organized and asserted itself. Carl E. Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (1980) comes to mind perhaps first; and indeed we cannot be surprised to find in Schorske's acknowledgments a prominent citation of Ann Douglas.

Less schematic than Schorske and working with less coherent materials, Douglas is if anything more expansive, subjective, and aggressive. Any reservations we may entertain have to do less with her exposition than with her subject, for who does not have developed opinions about New York City? After all, Manhattan has continued to be (unlike Vienna) in cultural conflict with the rest of its nation to such a degree that Senator Goldwater once memorably proposed cutting it off (along with the rest of the northeast) from America and letting it float out to sea. For some reason, his suggestion was not taken seriously, but modern technology that has made an honored prophet of Jules Verne may yet validate even the former senator from Arizona. Ann Douglas would not wish it so. Her survey of Manhattan in the 1920's, I think, is an indirect celebration of it now, and touches on every part of our self-definition, of the national psyche, the emotional economy of the nation. Yet I should add that this celebration is highly ambivalent, a celebration keenly attuned to contradiction, to the ironies and obscurities of extremity, and to the paradoxes of the imagination.

To put it bluntly, Professor Douglas seems to see most human endeavor and behavior as psychodrama. Her highly

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nuanced account of Freud is nothing if not critical, yet she sees the modern era as Freudian both explicitly and by implication. She also sees the more "open" visions of William James and Gertrude Stein as alternatives that were widely accessible to the modern mind. But these presences do not, to my own mind, seem to have connected as decisively as she claims with New York in the 1920's. Two other presences, T.S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway, were conspicuous absences from Manhattan though not from Professor Douglas's book, because, as she insists, they were part of modern consciousness. That's true enough, but a bit awkward when you are defining things by a location.

Yet I suppose that she has won her point: New York is a state of mind. Still, a striking weakness of her book is one that is bound with its subject, and that is the lack of stature of the host of minor figures who peopled Manhattan in the 1920's. Only some of them—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hart Crane—are worth citing in the context of Freud, James, Stein, Eliot, and Hemingway. The skyscrapers she admires so much cast longer shadows than do Dorothy Parker, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and many others of the period. At least three poets among these writers were obsessed with writing sonnets in quaint diction—defensible perhaps, but rather odd as a modernist stance.

The logic of literary ranking is swept away by Ann Douglas's panoramic approach, which flattens the perspective so that all New York writers are just that. Her broadly cultural approach equates all the arts, especially the popular arts as they become mass culture, with elite categories. Josephine Baker, whose "dancing seemed to center on shaking her rear end," is juxtaposed with Martha Graham. Indeed, alcoholism itself seems to become a cultural statement related to the rebellion against Mother. Considering who foisted Prohibition on America, Douglas has a point—one that deserves to be extended.

But the pairing of Baker and Graham seems to me to be less productive of insight than Douglas's repeated citation of Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew, the "Father of Public Relations" and author of *Propaganda* (1928). Bernays showed Madison Avenue how to exploit Freud's theories in a way that did and does separate our world from what went before—a way that continues to offer leverage for power through all the media of expression, and identifies that manipulation with New York and its extensions. Though this defining complex is one of her strongest points, Ms. Douglas does not seem aware that it confirms much American (and international) suspicion of New York. But, as urban lingo would have it, so what? The rest of America does not have much presence in *Terrible Honesty* anyway, being mostly an endless source of hicks and suckers as well as an extended site of Ku Klux Klan gatherings and lynchings.

Relating her exposition to this country in some way, Professor Douglas continues her argument from *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977) as to the cultural ascendancy of the matriarch, and the attendant sentimentality and spurious spiritualism of the Victorian era in America. The revolt against the (s)mother was provoked and even justified by what she is right to see as the rot of liberal Protestantism. She understands the politics of smarm as well as the cost of toughness, and has related them in a unique and imposing vision. In many ways though not in all, Ms. Douglas argues from a firm grasp of the most literal definition of culture. She has a sure sense of the continuities of cultural and ultimately spiritual failure—it is rather on the point of success that many would take issue with her.

The most positive aspect of *Terrible Honesty* is its emphasis on sheer fun—on exuberance and zest, on theatricality, role-playing, and reversal. The account of the Jazz Age itself swings and indulges in notable riffs. The once vaunted "mongrelization of the races" fortifies Douglas's subtitle with subtextual irony, for she shows a world in which black creativity depended on a white context, and in which white awareness required a black presence. The cultural prominence of the "New Negro" was a form of compensation for political and economic suppression. The new synthesis of mass culture arose just as the organs of the media were developed to disperse it globally—and this was a New York phenomenon, even though ragtime and blues and jazz were imported there. In this context, however, the distinction of such an artist and clown as Fats Waller is lost in the big picture that focuses on Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters. Professor Douglas's unrelenting evenhandedness sometimes reminds me of the dreaded pieties of the matriarch she has vividly portrayed.

The best qualities of her book, I think, are two: she reminds us, in a time of resentment and resegregation, that some of the most successful American cultural innovations were produced by response and cooperation between blacks and whites. And as a feminist, she insists that "any view of women that slights social constructions and historical perspectives appears . . . misguided, self-serving, and dangerous; self-criticism must play a larger role than self-promotion in any seriously feminist enterprise." These affirmations, remarkable today, must be commended on social, historical, political, and intellectual grounds, and also because I feel like it.

I am less satisfied, however, with other aspects of *Terrible Honesty*, particularly the absence of an account of the rise of organized crime in New York and in the country during Prohibition, and the penetration by organized crime of the entertainment industry. Douglas acknowledges the law-breaking style of the 20's and implies that gangster talk and logic pervaded the language of toughness and truth-telling, but she lets the point go. It should be dwelt on, for if naughtiness is justified, then in the days of corporate capitalism, what's wrong with a little business savvy?

Jazz began in New Orleans, and so did the Mafia. Jazz came out of whorehouses, was always connected with alcohol, became associated with drugs, and was situated in night clubs controlled by the mob. What did organized crime organize? Prostitution, gambling, alcohol, and drugs—a wink gets you in where the hot times are going on, and the tough guys get their cut. Harlem wasn't innocent even in the old days. Dutch Schultz controlled the numbers racket there until he was shot in 1935. Joe Glaser managed Louis Armstrong and fronted for Al Capone. The Cotton Club was a mob joint that made Duke Ellington an offer he couldn't refuse. Fats Waller once played for Al Capone for three days. But I don't mean to attribute connections with the mob solely to the best black jazzmen.

There was in New York in the 20's what we can call a culture of crime. Gangsters were cool. The mayor of New York, Jimmy Walker, admired by Ann Douglas and others for his style, was a crook. As Stephen Fox has indicated, Walter Winchell was not a crook, but

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he lived in the same apartment building as Frank Costello and accepted mob protection. Damon Runyon picked up his gangster lingo from the original sources—Al Capone and Arnold Rothstein being two of them. His stories, for all their colorful language, affirm the values of the mobsters. The mob had *nothing to fear in New York from writers*—quite the opposite, in fact.

Two particularly notable episodes in the New York of the Jazz Age are missing from Douglas's account—notable, I say, because they entered everyone's consciousness and were politically embarrassing to Jimmy Walker. One is the murder of Arnold Rothstein in 1928; another is the disappearance of Judge Crater in 1930. Arnold Rothstein, of course, actually did fix the 1919 World Series, as Meyer Wolfsheim, the gangster behind Jay Gatsby, is reputed to have done in Fitzgerald's superb romance—the greatest literary product of its time and place.

The criminal connections had literary repercussions, and their echo should be noted in the silence. Raymond Chandler, whose phrase Douglas has taken for her title, put a bigshot mobster in every one of his seven novels. He did so not only because of the melodramatic and verbal or Runyonesque possibilities, but also because he insisted on representing his part of America as mob-connected from top to bottom. He did it because it was terribly honest, and secondly because, I believe, Fitzgerald had shown that it was mandatory.

In spite of what we might think of as the displacement of Lucky Luciano by Gertrude Stein in Professor Douglas's vision of New York in the old days, I am convinced that *Terrible Honesty* is an important work about America now (not to mention then)—and perhaps most important to those who do not share the values that may be implied by it. A dense, challenging, and subtle work, it deserves many readers and will no doubt evoke all sorts of responses. Let me add that its Bibliographical Essay is itself worth the price of admission. I know of no book that more decisively demonstrates how *old* modernism is, how entrenched in our minds. It is, I think, a sort of inverted handbook—an infernal guide to just about everything that is wrong with our country. Neither Mary Baker Eddy nor the revolt against her seems attractive today, but the choice was a false dilemma even then. And even in the 1920's, there were Americans who knew it. Such a consciousness does not register in this account, but even Ann Douglas's everything must have a stop.

Yes, we have no bananas. Her insight and energy notwithstanding, the heritage of the 1920's does not seem to offer enough positive value to justify the emotional investment of Douglas's study, which is best as revisionist analysis, not aesthetic advocacy. Even the discography appended to it is an admission (for the recordings are all historical) that jazz has become a museum piece, most often heard today—mostly by whites—as a re-creation. The popular arts have largely become—how can I put this generously and objectively?—a coarse, boring, and industrialized mess, one largely the result of the destructive centralization packaged in that noble center of art and culture, New York in the 1920's.

Going to the big city where Terrible Mom can't see you get drunk and get laid is something that people have been doing since Nineveh. As an urbane classicist once pointed out to me, access to alcohol, prostitutes, and gambling is what cities have always provided, along with enough hoochie-coochie music to help you gag it down. Though the impulse to seek such services is quite understandable, it is, finally, something less than a cultural statement and even less a prescription for art. Worst of all, one result of excess is the tedious confession and sermonizing we have to endure from the survivors of it. Surveying the wreckage of a country, a culture, and a world, we would do well to look over at the emerging disaster in Eastern Europe, where freedom and Western or American culture mean alcoholism, gangsterism, pornography, swinging night clubs, and the rest of it. Sound familiar? And all of this without Christian Science!

Today nobody wants to take the A train up to Harlem anymore, and Lawrence Welk "plays" "jazz" for old geezers. The excitement of what was once a provocative beat has become the robotic manipulation of a computerized sound system. The prostitutes on Eighth Avenue actually twirl their handbags under streetlamps, and being young and addicted to the hard stuff, they seem ghoulishly appealing, if that's your taste. Skinny runaways from Podunk and Hicksville, they don't live long, as a rule. Today we could not hope or even imagine that their pimp might be a genius like Jelly Roll Morton. But look on the bright side: today various drugs give you a better hit than booze ever did, and the bookies are still wired by the mob when they are not literally part of the state bureaucracy. Ain't we got fun? I keep thinking of what a cultural critic more radical than Ann Douglas once said, though he didn't say it in English and he was once rude to his mother: "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"

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WHY HEATHER CAN'T WRITE

"*One overlooked corner* of the academic madhouse *bears* in particular on graduates' job-readiness: . . . today's education is not just *an irrelevance*. . . . For years, composition teachers have *absorbed* the worst *strains* in both popular and academic culture. The result is an indigestible *stew* . . . " (Emphases added.)

—from the opening of "Why Johnny Can't Write" by Heather MacDonald, the lead essay in the Summer 1995 issue of the Public Interest.

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Tackling the Judiciary

by Paul Gottfried

In Defense of the Constitution
by George W. Carey
Indianapolis: Liberty Press;
202 pp., $7.50

◆

Among conservative constitutional scholars, George Carey best demonstrates the knack of remaining perpetually relevant. From his collaboration with his own mentor Willmoore Kendall in the 1960's through his many writings on the *Federalist* papers over three decades, some included in this volume, Carey has worked to show the value of the American founding to our own changing political predicaments. He meticulously searches out the roots of America's constitutional tradition in William Blackstone and the English Common Law, as well as in the ideas of early American political leaders. Carey takes pains to contextualize our founding document as a political nation. He insists that the phrascology in which Madison, Hamilton, and Jay spoke of liberties, rights, and procedures came out of a particular legal understanding. Without reading the English jurists going back to Edward Coke and Magna Carta, and also American political dignitaries of the 18th century, Carey maintains, one cannot properly grasp the notion of "due process." By the late 18th century, an entire body of dicta existed for this term, which had come to mean prescribed judicial procedure. Thus, Carey reasons, the phrase "due process of law," which appears in the Fifth Amendment, was intended to refer to certain limits placed on the judiciary. This was the inherited meaning of that term in the Anglo-American world of the time. It did not signify, contrary to the statements of recent social activists, the power of judges to place restraints upon elected legislatures.

Carey's strength as a constitutional interpreter is that he gladly performs drudge work in order to expose dishonest judicial activism. Like Lino Graglia and Robert Bork, he catalogues the constitutional abuses in which liberal judges have engaged since the 1950's. He shows how some amendments and sections of amendments have become "privileged," because of their compatibility with the "new morality" favored by judges and the media. Other amendments, like the Ninth and Tenth, have been pushed into oblivion because they have been deemed to have no strategic use. Judicial social engineers have tried to bypass states' rights, and the entire concept of distributed power, in order to get what they want in a hurry. Most outrageously, argues Carey, judges have abused the Fifth Amendment's "due process" in two ways: first, by allowing the federal government to use it, often quite arbitrarily, against states; second, by citing that phrase to increase their power, contrary to the clear intent of the authors of the Fifth Amendment.

Carey does not pretend that the Constitution's authors rejected entirely judicial oversight. Though Article Three does not bestow upon the Supreme Court an explicit power of judicial review, in *Federalist* 78 Hamilton recognizes that the highest court may exercise such a function. In fact, he hoped that the judiciary would restrain the "momentary" inclination of the "representatives of the people" when their "dangerous innovations" were incompatible with "the provisions of the existing Constitution." But Hamilton, and certainly Madison, did not believe that the Supreme Court should be allowed to legislate—or impose its political will against the stated will of Congress. Only legislative assemblies, according to Hamilton in *Federalist* 78, should be empowered to exercise "will." In its role of judicial oversight, the Supreme Court was only offering judgments to guide the other branches of the federal government. And judicial oversight, as Hamilton understood that function, was to take place without "arbitrary discretion," in accordance with the "clear tenor of the Constitution." Where judges were not "bound down by strict rules," there was no reason for legislators to listen to them. And the other branches of government long viewed themselves as free to ignore expressions of judicial activism which they found arbitrary. Both Andrew Jackson and the Reconstruction Congress ignored Supreme Court decisions. And in neither case was there a public outcry against constitutional abuse. Of the three federal branches, the judiciary was conceived as the weakest: its only expressed power in the Constitution is to function as the highest appellate court.

Carey proposes to deal with judicial usurpation by having Congress strip the Supreme Court of its by now abused role of oversight. He rightly reasons that there is little chance to settle this problem piecemeal, for example, by having Republican Presidents appoint nonactivist judges. Such an approach has involved moving one step forward and another back, as administrations change—and with them the power of judicial appointment. It is incorrect, as Carey notes, to draw distinctions between activist and nonactivist judges when what is meant by activism is the imposition of an eccentric social morality by judicial fiat. Carey documents how far the advocates of this morality have gone in twisting plain constitutional language in pursuit of their plans. As in the reference to due process, Carey shows that social activist judges disregard "original intention," even when it is illuminated by centuries of legal exegesis.

What distinguishes George Carey from some paleoconservatives, and from all neoconservatives, is that he genuinely believes in popular government. His studies of the Constitution attempt to prove that the Founders were not hostile to the popular will, as has often been contended. What they wished to do when they instituted certain filters, as when they provided for the indirect election of senators, was to make sure that the popular will was also a "deliberate" one. Carey couples his populist arguments with an emphasis on responsible citizenship. He stresses that our true constitutional tradition is one of the people governing themselves through accountable representatives. Within this

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arrangement, the source of unity will not be philosopher kings who rule by social engineering but from a shared cultural framework, from what Carey's preceptor Willmoore Kendall called "agreement about first principles." Owing to his concern for the role of citizenship and the preconditions for popular government, Carey also recognizes the limits of modern democracy. True self-rule, he believes, requires cultural cohesion, a cautious immigration policy, and popular resistance to the "new morality" imposed by judges, public administrators, and the media.

His own prescription for defanging the Supreme Court is in line with his populist outlook. It may also be the only approach that is both constitutionally sound and efficient: namely, that a federal branch, which enjoys more democratic legitimacy and more *authorized* constitutional power, be entrusted with the job of controlling the Court. Unfortunately, this approach is unlikely to work, for at least three reasons. No Congress which we are likely to get, including the present Republican one, would ever carry out that deed of emasculation which Carey advocates. At the present time, even "conservative" Republican senator and presidential contender Phil Gramm is telling the public that he will do nothing to reverse *Roe* v. *Wade*, the century's most controversial and least constitutionally defensible Supreme Court decision. Unless Carey believes that one can elect a truly conservative Congress, it seems unlikely that the legislative branch will move decisively against usurping courts. Also, congressmen have behaved at least as outrageously as judges in stripping the states of their constitutional rights. From the New Deal's National Recovery Act and labor union legislation down to the Disabilities and Civil Rights Acts of 1991, Congress has moved relentlessly against the right of states to manage their internal commerce. They have done even more damage to our system of dual federalism by controlling the states' voting practices, most recently through the passage of the unfunded Motor Voter Act. Finally, the Supreme Court, as conceived by Hamilton, was intended to fulfill the worthy role of calling attention to "dangerous innovations" being practiced by the people's representatives. At times, the Supreme Court has performed this function: for example, as when it restrained the New Deal by bringing up the *constitutional* limits on Congress's power to regulate commerce. Moreover, a prudent Republican Supreme Court worked to rein in the Radical Republican Senate after the Civil War. While the Court may never again exhibit such tender regard for our original Constitution, it is not less likely to do so than Congress. And there is no justification for believing that Congress, if left to its own devices, would develop a deeper appreciation for dual federalism than has been the norm since the 1930's.

I raise these critical points because of my general sympathy for Carey's politics. Unlike other, less educated populists, he does fully understand the causes of our present discontent. His essay "Majority Rule and the Extended Republic Theory of James Madison," though originally published in 1976 except for the introductory note, remains as timely now as when it was first written. It argues that Madison's demonstration, in *Federalist* 10, that the proliferation of factions in a growing republic is a safeguard against tyranny, has only diminishing value to our generation. What Madison did not foresee is the "disintegration of independent forces" with the emergence of social democracy and the changed role of government in our own society. Such "positive government" encourages cultural pluralism and the clash of particular interests to elevate itself above the fray. It designates itself as the only permissible source of direction in a society which it has pushed adrift. Carey criticizes Madison for what he neglects to say in *Federalist* 10, that there must be shared moral truths, definable national interests, and a common good, for American society to work.

In these sage comments on Madison, Carey also reveals the common problem of all populist conservatives. Appeals to the popular will are both necessary and constitutionally proper: necessary to challenge the undemocratic power of the political class and proper inasmuch as these appeals do have a constitutional basis. More problematic is whether there is still a recognizable "people," as opposed to globalized consumers and an all-pervasive political class. If such a "people" does not exist, that is, if there is no possibility for a self-defined and enduring political community, all the talk about "returning power" is so much empty breath. Carey knows this, and suggests it repeatedly. But he also stakes his politics on a glimmering hope, that the slumbering popular giant may yet awaken. Without a better choice, I for one am willing to follow his lead.

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Role Models and Poetry

by E. Christian Kopff

The Epic of Gilgamesh
by Danny P. Jackson
Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci; 101 pp., $15.00

◆

Societies, as much as individuals, need role models. For good and for ill, our cultural tradition has been influenced by the figures of Achilles and Odysseus, placed at the center of our moral imagination by Homer almost three millennia ago. The shaping power of the tradition is clearest where there has been no direct influence, as when Machiavelli talks of "the Lion and the Fox" or when popular art divides its heroes into the quiet strongman and the wise-cracking Trickster. One reason for the immense staying power of action movies over the last decades is their unwavering loyalty to the mythological symbols that still rule our imagination.

"There were many brave men before Agamemnon," the poet Horace reminded us, and there were heroes before Achilles and Odysseus. These were symbols of courage and strength and survival that shaped the imagination of the high cultures of the Near East, where mankind first developed urban life, irrigation, pottery wheels, smelting, bureaucracy, and many other inventions, large and small, that still structure the routine of our daily lives. Noah Kramer wrote about some of these inventions in his *History Begins in Sumer*. While in the

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strict sense, history did not begin in Sumer—it began in Greece, the home of science, tragedy, and democracy—the many discoveries that did begin in the Fourth and Third Millennium world of Mesopotamia still affect our lives in ways we do not notice or understand.

A continuous cultural tradition dominated the urban world of the ancient Near East from the third Millennium until Cyrus the Persian and his descendants conquered it in the second half of the sixth century B.C. Its shaping heroes bore the strange names of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Gilgamesh, unconquerable warrior, insatiable lover, was king of Uruk in Mesopotamia (Biblical Erech, Warka in modern Iraq); the gods created as his peer and rival Enkidu, the wild man. The two met, fought, and became best friends. When Ishtar, goddess of sex, failed to seduce Gilgamesh, she sent the Bull of Heaven to ravage their lands. The two heroes slew the bull, and in revenge Ishtar caused the death of Enkidu. Gilgamesh mourns his friend in a lament that takes up most of a clay tablet and then decides to seek the elixir of life from the only human to win immortality from the gods: Utnapishtim, who survived the Great Flood. The Tenth and Eleventh tablets tell of Gilgamesh's search for Utnapishtim, of the latter's tale of the Flood (having many parallels to the Biblical story of Noah), and of Gilgamesh's departure with the herb which will give eternal life to Gilgamesh and his people. While he is swimming in a pool, a snake eats the herb. Gilgamesh will not live forever, but his memory will be immortal.

Tales about the adventures of Gilgamesh and Enkidu have been found in many languages all over the Near East from the two millennia that preceded Cyrus's conquests. The most complete version was written down for the library of the great Assyrian monarch, Ashurbanipal, in his capital city of Nineveh by the Tigris in the seventh century B.C. When the resurgent Babylonians destroyed Assyrian power shortly after Ashurbanipal's death, the 12 clay tablets of the Epic of Gilgamesh remained covered by hot, dry sand for thousands of years, until English archaeologists unearthed them and brought them to the British Museum in London. A hardworking and quiet pedant named George Smith worked for months on the clay fragments, piecing together what we now call the Eleventh Tablet, the story of a flood that resembles the deluge in Genesis. Finally he got far enough to see what the story was about. His fellow workers heard a commotion from his study and went in to see what was happening. They found Smith stark naked, singing and dancing around the room, overcome with joy at his new discovery. Gilgamesh, like other epic heroes, rejoices in conquest and grieves at defeat and death. Did any great hero in his warmaking and lovemaking ever know the emotion that filled George Smith the day he first deciphered that broken tablet?

Will this new translation by Danny P. Jackson give the reader some of the same joy? That is an unfair question, but there are at least two audiences who will derive much pleasure from this latest attempt to breathe life into the dead bones—or sundried clay tablets—of this old epic. Jackson's version tells the story in a clear and effective fashion, with attention to levels of language and narrative form. The first is students in university Myth classes, who will be able to grasp the story and its characters without being confused by scholarly minutiae. The $4.95 price for the student edition is just right, although it means seeing Thom Kapheim's effective and sometimes powerful illustrations in black and white, instead of the brooding dark colors of the regular editions. (There are also 18 pages of photographs of ancient art and documents.) The second is those who are seeking in translations from the West's rich past a way to resurrect the art of poetry in our day, or to initiate its resurrection in the next generation. Contemporary poetry has lost its mission and, as in the 16th century, it is seeking in translation of ancient works a means of finding its way out of the dark forest and back onto the high summit it once occupied. Unfortunately, the recent wave of translators has given us few masterpieces. I am impressed by Ted Hughes' version of Seneca's *Oedipus* from the late 60's and Dana Gioia's translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, hot off the Johns Hopkins University Press. There are several works which dilute great success by dubious experiments: David Slavitt's *Eclogues* of Vergil, Tony Harrison's *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, Christopher Logue's version of Homer's *Iliad*.

Danny Jackson's *Gilgamesh* holds a middle position in this school, maintaining a consistent level of poetic accomplishment. I am dubious about the idea of having the gods speak in short, staccato rhymes. This technique is amusing in Tablet Six, where Ishtar, the goddess of sex, tries to seduce Gilgamesh, but it is less effective in the mouth of the Sun-god, Shamash, as he addresses Enkidu before his death. The decision to call Ninhursag, mother of the gods, "She-who-must-be-obeyed" (for *Belet-ili*, "mistress of the gods") introduces an intrusive reminiscence of Public Television's Rumpole, who always uses the title (borrowed from Rider Haggard) in reference to his wife.

As a whole, Jackson's work is lively, exciting, and dignified. It will interest students, and may provide future generations with lines and expressions that will form part of a new birth of great poetry. Those who are not poets may learn from Gilgamesh and his best friend the lure of high accomplishment, the ennobling excitement of facing fearful odds, and the bitter tragedy of death, which ends even the greatest adventures. This is the moral poetry that has urged our culture into so many high achievements, and may do so again, if we will listen to its music.

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The American Churchill

by William R. Hawkins

Theodore Roosevelt: An American Mind
by Mario R. DiNunzio
New York: St. Martin's Press;
359 pp., $24.95

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While reading this wide-ranging collection, I was struck once again by the similarities between Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Both were prolific writers of

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books and essays that incorporate history and political thought with personal experience. And while the prime motive of both men was to earn extra income, each had an energetic style that continues to bring readers back to their work.

Roosevelt and Churchill owe their reputations not just to the fact that they led their governments in critical times, but to the personal traits that propelled them to high office. Their strong, exuberant characters were formed by remarkably similar experiences. Roosevelt was born in 1858, 16 years before Churchill. Yet both were baptized by fire in the same conflict, the Cuban revolution against Spain: Churchill, as a newly commissioned cavalry officer, was sent to Cuba in 1895 as an observer, while Roosevelt went to Cuba in 1898 with the 1st Volunteer Cavalry Regiment after resigning his post as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. At about the same time Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" were charging up the hills outside Santiago, Churchill was in the Sudan making the last great charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman. Both men felt the need to test themselves in action, Churchill as a soldier and war correspondent (including time in the trenches during World War I), Roosevelt—whose military experience was limited—as a cowboy and big game hunter. Mario DiNunzio includes substantial passages from Roosevelt's reminiscences of these years.

Churchill won his first seat in Parliament about the same time Roosevelt was elected Vice President. Both had an abundance of personal ambition, tied firmly to the desire to advance the fortunes of their nations in fulfillment of a duty, as they saw it, owed by virtue of their privileged positions. Neither man was willing to sacrifice his beliefs for mere party conformity or private gain. Churchill is best known as a Conservative, but during the period 1904-1922, he sat across the aisle as a Liberal; Roosevelt split from the Republicans and ran as a third party presidential candidate in 1912. A difference between the two men is the result of the disparate positions of their respective countries along the trajectory of a Great Power. Churchill was trying to maintain the power of the British Empire; Roosevelt to establish an American Empire. Roosevelt's spirit matched that of a young nation which had just conquered a continent and was looking for new challenges. While Churchill lived to see massive, grinding government oppress his country, Roosevelt knew enough of history and human nature to warn constantly against the danger in his day.

Roosevelt recognized several "types" who might bar the way to American greatness. First was the "peace-at-any-price, universal-arbitration type of being" on the pacifist left whom he regarded as "utterly useless" and whom he battled all his life. Second was the liberal internationalist who hated the military but was forever getting the country embroiled in foreign disputes, usually without any regard for the national interest; Woodrow Wilson was one of Roosevelt's favorite targets on this score. Third was the Big Businessman who bankrolled his Republican Party. In a reprinted segment of his 1913 autobiography, Roosevelt notes that "our strongest and most capable men had thrown themselves into business. . . . While many of them down at the bottom possessed the fundamental virtues, including the fighting virtues, others were purely of the glorified huckster or pawnbroker type—which when developed to the exclusion of everything else makes about as poor a national type as the world has seen." This passage foreshadows Joseph Schumpeter's criticism of bourgeois society made some 30 years later in his classic *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*.

Here is the source of the seeming contradiction of Roosevelt's career. Recognized as a Progressive for his trust-busting campaign against Big Business and his advocacy of a "square deal" for the working man, in every other area Roosevelt was a staunch conservative. The confusion is caused by the perspective of today, when establishment conservatives have lost their wider social bearings and have become little more than the lapdogs of transnational corporations that the left has always accused them of being. Roosevelt held to a more authentic conservatism, one that embraced society rather than withdrew from it. DiNunzio sees Roosevelt primarily as a conservative, not a category of persons he admires. While conceding Roosevelt's talent and place in history, he deprecates his "jingoism" and his "less attractive views on race and class."

Among the 52 entries DiNunzio reprints is an interesting essay from 1917 in which Roosevelt blasts the "feminists" and other "foolish women" of his day, while exalting motherhood. "Woman is society," says Roosevelt, "she must bear and rear the children as her first duty to the state; and the man's first duty is to take care of her and the children." Yet, because he saw the family as an equal commitment and partnership between husband and wife, Roosevelt believed women also deserve the vote, and to participate otherwise in national affairs. He regarded families as the building blocks of the nation, and condemned equally any violation of trust within either institution: "Treason, like adultery, ranks as one of the worst of all possible crimes."

It is because Theodore Roosevelt thought for himself on the large issues and had the courage to argue strong positions—as well as the talent to do so in stirring fashion—that this collection of his writings is so enjoyable.

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Murder in the Wasteland

by Wayne Allensworth

Original Sin
by P.D. James
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;
416 pp., $24.00

◆

The mystery novel, to borrow a line from *Original Sin*, has all the virtues of its defects. "The mystery," Baroness James explained in a recent *Washington Post* interview, "deals with the *planned* murder" and is thus confined to a certain formulaic structure in which a detective protagonist confronts an often unsavory lot of suspects, all of whom must be plausible as potential killers; and, through his own deductive powers, exposes the perpetrator and makes right a universal order disturbed by the open rebellion that is murder.

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The killer is most often either a supreme egotist who kills for personal gain or satisfaction, or a vengeful Ahab whose angry rejection of the universal order amounts to blasphemy. Thus, in some ways, the mystery novel, which so often utilizes stereotype and structural formula along with a recurring protagonist for the sake of a stable point of view, is supremely predictable. The mystery has had great difficulty, therefore, in being accepted as anything but diversion by modern critics, who have been trained to look down their collective noses at the very concept of form in art. After all, the mystery has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and is predicated on form and structure, conflict and resolution. In the conventional mystery novel, the murderer *will* be found out.

What many critics have long forgotten is the purpose of the form. The mystery, like Greek tragedy, the plays of Shakespeare, or American Western films, is, paradoxically, freed by the very confines of its formula to explore the human condition. The predictable layout of the story allows the skilled writer to deal with broad themes within the confines of the novel's pattern and, in the end, to affirm some greater truth than the mere identity of a criminal. As James herself has put it, murder is "taken so seriously" by the mystery novelist that the crime itself, and the determined uncovering of the criminal, serves as a reminder to us that murder is a "unique crime," a crime which has lost some of its former sense of awesomeness in the very murderous 20th century. In a sense, the mystery as art propels us back into a frame of mind lost under the onslaught of modernity. "It is reassuring," says James, "to think there could be a society in which . . . it [murder] is still a uniquely dreadful act."

In recent years, some critics have begun to give mysteries, and P.D. James, their due. James is a skilled craftsman and perceptive writer who has done for the mystery what John le Carré did for the spy novel. Her characters are fully fleshed out human beings, her stories rich in detail, and her prose surpasses that of many of our pretentious "serious" novelists. Still, much has gone unnoticed by the critics who are now praising James and the mystery novel, in particular the question of the mystery's resolution and that of the recurring Christian imagery of James's novels. Just what (or whose) universal order is being set right by the capture and, presumably, the punishment of the murderer? Moreover, I have yet to read a review of a James novel (this is her 13th) that comments on the Christian themes and images so often invoked in her mysteries.

Some of the crime is a mock Venetian mansion of some architectural note (dubbed "Innocent House" by the 19th-century builder) standing alongside the Thames, ancient and majestic witness to both the triumph and folly of man in the guise of ancient Romans, medieval Saxons and Normans, and modern Englishmen. Gerard Étienne (the character's unusual name may have been borrowed from 16th-century Bible scholar Robert Étienne), the ruthless and charming managing director of a venerable London publishing house, the Peverell Press, has been murdered, suffocated by gas fumes in a closed room, and bizarrely mocked in death; a toy snake has been wrapped around his neck, the gaping head of the serpent stuffed in his mouth. Étienne was a man with many enemies: a jilted lover, a sensitive author rejected by the firm, and ambitious and jealous colleagues, one of whom committed suicide shortly before his own demise.

Innocent House, its innocence lost long ago after the suicide (murder?) of the Peverell Press founder's wife (literally a Fall: she fell from the house's balcony, leaving a bloodstain, the house's mark of Cain, visible on the patio below for years afterward), serves as a microcosm of James's London and the modern world in general, a wasteland of empty and faithless creatures who, when not brooding over the futility and meaninglessness of their own lives, are busy clawing their way to the top of the Darwinian heap they live in, consuming each other like so many links in a pitiless world's food chain. One character, brooding after the funeral of a colleague, notes that the religious service that accompanied the burial of the deceased was itself a futile and emasculated ritual, a rejectionist denial lacking in substance and marked by a "liturgy revised to offend no one, including God."

Enter James's protagonist, Scotland Yard's Adam Dalgliesh, sometime poet, son of an Anglican rector, and connoisseur of church architecture, who serves as James's alter ego, a detached but compassionate observer of the fallen state of the world, a prophet who reminds the novel's characters not only of sin and the existence of evil but of the possibility of redemption. Dalgliesh's role in uncovering sin (including his own), his pondering of the problem of pain (his wife was killed years earlier in a car accident), and his role as confessor (once again, James, like Le Carré, masterfully uses the vehicle of interrogation as a device for uncovering motivation and propelling the story forward to resolution) have allowed James to exploit the full potential of the mystery novel, and his brooding presence provides *Original Sin*, as in the best of James's detective novels, with a center of gravity, a stabilizing factor in a complex narrative. Dalgliesh is the novel's touchstone (though he appears less often than in earlier outings), a man living in the sprawl of modern London, but somehow not *of* it. Where else but in a P.D. James mystery novel will the reader find a recurring character in popular fiction who ponders the "dying echoes of plainsong and the vibration of 1,300 years of muttered prayer" in an ancient chapel before questioning a suspect, or who debates the concepts of grace, sin, and mercy with a backsliding nun?

As James often uses the juxtaposition of the modern with the ancient (medieval churches with modern skyscrapers, villages with cities, or, as in *Devices and Desires*, ancient ruins with a modern nuclear power station) to contrast the Age of Faith with Modernism, the organic with the contrived, humility with hubris, and the evils of the past with the even bleaker present, so she often uses the dignified Dalgliesh as a counterweight to his colleagues, in this case a feminist subordinate who will not allow her love for a man to block her intended smashing of the "glass ceiling," and an unbelieving Jewish detective struggling with his own self-pity and his estrangement from the religion of his parents. Indeed, the condition of most of the characters in the novel is that of perplexed guilt: they are suffocated by the yoke of original sin, but have no idea what to do about it. They *feel* guilty, but often do not know why. Most seek escape in careerism, or in one of the many other pseudoreligions or ideologies by which modern humans seek to leave the sinking ship.

In the end, as we expect, the narrative

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ends in the unmasking of the killer and his forced confrontation with his own monstrous guilt. Another satisfying mystery has been solved, another plot unraveled, and if it all seems a bit contrived, we remember that this form allows James to flex her literary muscles in other, more edifying ways. The familiar framework provides James with a platform to mull over the degraded condition of London's lumpen proletariat, made childish and repellent in part by the misguided ministrations of the welfare state, capital punishment, revenge versus retribution, grievance and justice, fidelity and treachery, and the really big question that always seems to be knocking about in the minds of her characters: Is this all there is?

Some will say James is doing nothing more than using familiar imagery to bolster a genre that is essentially escapist, that she is not making a Big Point, any more than George Lucas was when he recycled ancient mythology as high-tech pulp fiction in his *Star Wars* movies. Maybe. At the same time, isn't the exploitation of the popular form to larger and perhaps, in part, unselfconscious ends precisely what the best storytellers do? I know nothing of James's religious convictions, and there are times, especially in her 1986 *A Taste for Death*, when the religious images appear secondary to a pervasive and grim agnosticism. Still, Christian themes and images are a constant part of her mystery fiction, particularly in the Dalgliesh novels, and she has over the years come back again and again to what should be by now familiar territory to discerning readers.

Wayne Allensworth writes from Purcellville, Virginia.

Brief Mentions

I Shared the Dream: The Pride, Passion and Politics of the First Black Woman Senator From Kentucky
By Georgia Davis Powers (Far Hills, New Jersey: New Horizon Press), 321 pp., $25.95

"She was 'The Woman' the press whispered about, with Dr. Martin Luther King on that last tragic trip to Memphis," reads the back-cover blurb in oversize type. No, not Irene Adler, but the "first black woman senator from Kentucky." Georgia Powers has finally come forward and described her many trysts with King, recounting how she tried to climb into the ambulance with the dying King but was told by Andy Young, "No, Senator, I don't think you want to do

that." Unfortunately, this should also have been the publisher's response to Powers' attempt at autobiography, for do we really need to know about her first menstruation, the size of her "full chest," how she cheated on her first husband, cheated on her second husband, and once broke into the house of a couple she cleaned for as a teen in order to use their bedroom to make love to her boyfriend? True, Powers was ahead of her time. When the homeowner discovered that he had Lolita instead of Hazel for a housecleaner, Powers threatened to accuse him of sexual advances if he ever complained to her parents. And Powers does occasionally unearth a gem, as when she remembers a particular phone conversation between King and his legal advisor Stanley Levison. Upon hanging up the phone, King was overhead muttering, "Cowardice asks, is it safe? Expediency asks, is it political? Vanity asks, is it popular? But Conscience asks, is it right?" "Will you use that in our speeches?" asks Powers. "He smiled, 'I will use it when it is appropriate.' I said, 'M.L., is anything we do and say original?' He replied, 'Originality comes only from God.'" But the preponderance of this book is rank self-promotion that ironically tarnishes every individual and cause that Powers has always championed. For does learning details of King's adulteries improve our image of the man? Will highlighting these "family values" of the original civil rights leaders help alleviate the plague of promiscuity ravaging the black family today? Powers has long been honored as a pioneering black feminist whose political accomplishments won greater respect for women of all races, but is stealing another woman's man, and doing so repeatedly, an act of "respect," of "female solidarity"? Is this what "empowerment" really means? "After that first night [with King]," she writes, "I knew there was no going back. How could I *not* seize the moment . . . no matter what the obstacles. . . . I have never regretted being there with him." Conscience does indeed ask, "Is it right?" And King and Georgia Powers replied, "Who cares?"

—Theodore Pappas

Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work: A Memoir. *By H.L. Mencken. Edited by Fred Hobson, Vincent Fitzpatrick, and Bradford Jacobs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 390 pp., $34.95*

This volume is the last substantial legacy provided by the author's will which, operating on the principle of time-release, has already resulted in the publication of the *Diary of H.L. Mencken* and the availability of many useful letters and papers. While *Thirty-five Years* adds little if anything to what was already known of Mencken's life, it does fill out stories and episodes, and in general makes a superior period-piece, less formalized but more informative than the *Days* trilogy. A case may be made, indeed, that period-work, apart from philology, was what Mencken did best, as well as being the most lasting of his accomplishments. He wrote beautifully, with the smoothness of hawser-rope coming off a winch; and his prose, when freed from the rhetorical horsing-around of the essays, columns and other opinion-pieces, is all the more supple, at the same time muscular and smooth as silk. Although the book held no surprises for this reader, I found myself reading on, and on, without skipping, held to the text as if on rails and powered by the terrific momentum generated by the writer himself. *Thirty-five Years* is vastly more interesting than the undeservedly notorious *Diary*, and provides a fitting supplement to *My Life as Author and Editor*, edited by Jonathan Yardley. Contrary to contemporary opinion, Mencken's most baleful influence on the several generations of writers that followed him stemmed not from his bluntness on various tender topics, but rather from the apparent imitability of his absolutely inimitable style. In this regard, the message of the last of his great projects to all young authors, and many mature ones, is invaluable: *Write well*; and you will be read forever.

—Chilton Williamson, Jr.

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Letter From Massachusetts

by Eugene Narrett

Our Mr. Brooks

◆

Hometown of John F. Kennedy, Brookline, Massachusetts, blends small-scale charm with a shabby urbanity. Plugged like a weak rib into Boston's west edge, Brookline is laced with picturesque trolleys and dotted with quaint buildings. Its citizenry is an odd mix of recent immigrants from Russia and the Caribbean, college students, seniors, a tasteful dollop of minorities on welfare, and hip singles battening on rent-controlled apartments. Brookline is home base for Planned Parenthood and for gaily proud Congressman Barney Frank, famous for dancing with his husband at Beltway balls. All in all, the town boasts a ferocious political correctness rarely seen outside Cambridge, Berkeley and Ann Arbor.

My primary example of Brookline *chic* concerns a lifestyles initiative at the Runkle School, a K-8. It was a sort of unofficial pilot project, a counseling program not yet packaged for national distribution. As of this writing, the story hasn't spread much beyond the boutiques of Beacon Street. And no wonder; the key players prefer it be a secret, for in its small, ugly way it exposes the heart of our contemporary darkness. Perhaps similar initiatives are at work in your neighborhood.

In fall 1993, about a year into Bill Clinton's term, Craig Goddard was surprised when his kids came home from school talking about how a woman could turn into a man. The mommy of one of their classmates was becoming a daddy, they said. The school guidance counselor was telling them all about it. Goddard asked around and learned that other parents were hearing similar stories. Alarmed, several of them contacted school principal Martin Sleeper for further information. "We weren't challenging them at first," Goddard said. "We were just trying to get information."

Sleeper verified that Brenda Stern, Runkle school guidance counselor, was speaking with first-grade students about the sex-change. The physical appearance of the parent in question was much altered. She was dressing like a man ("like a teenage boy," Goddard recalls) and developing facial hair. Her voice was cracking.

Principal Sleeper confirmed to parents that the transsexual had been meeting regularly with himself and Stern to lobby for the meetings with the first graders. The transsexual had insisted on being present when the children were counseled so that she could answer their questions directly. Sleeper refused to provide concerned parents of other children in the class with any verbal details or written notes on the contents of these meetings. He did confirm, states Goddard, that "they were trying to convey to the kids that the sex change was just another type of normal experience."

"Counseling" was deemed necessary partly because the lesbian was often at the school, "helping out" four or five days a week in the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms. So her mutation was on display as a kind of show-and-tell. Why not make it formal counseling? Guidance counselor Stern defended her talks with the children. "We wanted them to hear it from one source," she said. "Not from 18 sets of parents."

Goddard recounted that parents asked Stern whether she had any professional experience or training with this kind of counseling. She acknowledged she did not, but said she felt it necessary to be "sensitive" to the concerns of the transsexual parent and "to any questions the kids might have."

While Stern and Sleeper were attentive to the transsexual's urgent agenda, they were less sensitive, though not less curious, about the other kids' families. In the course of discussions with the principal that continued into spring 1994, Goddard learned that not only did Stern and Sleeper counsel the first graders on the normalcy of the sex change, but that they solicited information about the personal lives of the other parents. "In my son's case," said Goddard, "they wanted to know about my divorce." Religion and other "lifestyle" topics were compared to the sex change as examples of cultural diversity.

Principal Sleeper and guidance counselor Stern may have been diligent in pursuing their therapeutic mission and curious in soliciting personal data about the students' families. But they were not thorough in all matters. For one thing, they had failed to alert parents to the latest item on the public school erotic agenda. Little surprise, perhaps, but like many schools in Massachusetts and elsewhere in these days of expanded lifestyle counseling, each grade at Runkle has a parent designated to act as intermediary between families and administrators. In this case, however, the parent was kept in the dark. When finally alerted to the situation, the intermediary's response was instructive, for it was strictly a procedural one. While critical of the school for failing to contact parents in advance, she refused to criticize the fact or content of the counseling itself.

After several months of largely fruitless meetings (the transsexual continued to work several days a week at the school as a volunteer), the story leaked to the press. A couple of cable stations picked it up and it briefly was a small media event. At this point, Brookline's Superintendent of Schools ordered Sleeper to apologize to parents. He did so, for failing to notify them in advance about the counseling. The limited nature of the apology was neither an accident nor an oversight. At a Parents and Teachers Organization meeting, the treasurer, a member of the state teachers' union, stated that his primary concern was to "protect the Brookline public schools" and to "get it [the controversy] out of the media."

I received a similar message when researching the story. Counselor Stern failed to return my calls. When I finally got through to Martin Sleeper and asked if I could have his view of the events, he said brusquely, "I have no comment. That situation is finished. I have nothing at all to say. Nothing." Then he hung up.

But perhaps the matter is not finished. I asked Goddard whether he and the other parents had sought redress beyond the partial apology. Had they consulted a lawyer, I asked. Had they requested the dismissal of the principal or guidance

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counselor? "We did talk to a lawyer," Goddard told me. "And we were informed that unless we could show that the kids had been harmed, we were told we couldn't sue." Although million-dollar suits now are filed for falling off a toilet seat, the legal establishment seems to feel that no harm is done by counseling six-year-olds about transsexualism. As for dismissal, Goddard states that parents sought disciplinary action against Sleeper and Stern but were received coldly by the school board. "We heard from other parents that the school now considered us troublemakers," Goddard said. Another parent commented that the principal's message to them was that they should "get over it."

This was not quite the end. Early in 1994, after a program about the case on a local cable station, concerned parents found the transsexual in class the next morning interviewing the children for their response. She was soliciting their questions and talking about the media coverage. "This time Sleeper did ask her to leave the class," Goddard reports. "But just for the day. Then we were informed that she wanted the other kids to refer to her as "Ben's daddy." Sleeper was "supporting this request but I refused," Goddard says, adding, "I asked him if he would let a parent come into school and proselytize about religion. He wouldn't answer me."

We know what the answer to that question is. Prayer and positive comment on Western religion is prohibited by current transgendering of the establishment clause. Multiculturalists are intent that children learn the correct lessons about the oppressiveness of our religion, history, and gender roles. Nothing must get in the way, not European history, not even parental concerns about transsexual tutors in first-grade classrooms.

We probably should not be surprised by the little ruckus at the Runkle School. It's not unique. Fourth graders in Ashland, Massachusetts, have been led to role-play homosexual couples eager to adopt a child. Seventh graders are quizzed in "Health Ed" about the link between penis size and sexual pleasure. High schoolers are taught 19 methods of birth control. (I'm told that abstinence was not mentioned). Self-styled AIDS educators present eighth graders with condom-puppet shows enacting safe sex for every type of intercourse. It's a veritable rainbow of options.

Those who protest such curricula are termed homophobes. Robert Murphy, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Union (MTA), recently labeled as "wacky" any parents who wish to be notified in advance of such agendas. He derided them as "members of the Christian Coalition of Pat Robertson fame." He dismissed as "a bureaucratic boondoggle" a bill in the state legislature that would require ten days' advance notice to parents before presenting students with information on "homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexualism, drug use or suicide." Then Murphy concluded his diatribe by claiming that he wanted "to rebuild the trust between the schools and the community." I wrote to ask him whether we could rebuild this trust by counseling six-year-olds about sex-change operations. There was no reply. In the gay 90's, trust is a curious thing.

And so the story ends, losing itself in the pathways of our culture. But as with all stories, there is a footnote. Runkle School's sexual monster is still there several days a week, giving the kids a living demonstration of diversity. I told Goddard I was amazed that after all the commotion the school had not required her to pursue other work. He made clear that the problem is not just the administrators, the principal, guidance counselor, and teachers' union. "We were running into a majority of very progressive parents who even if they had concerns were bending over backward to support this transsexual," he told me. "When I complained, they labeled me as Christian Coalition. That's their standard accusation," he said.

I asked Craig Goddard if he thought he and the other concerned parents had gotten through to the school, if he thought they would now desist or reflect on their attitudes. "I'm not convinced they won't do it again," he replied. "If an issue like this slips by the coordinator, what happens with less bizarre issues? They could be going on as we speak."

When I wrote about this story for my local daily paper, I was denounced as a homophobe at the college where I teach. Like feminism and homosexuality, transsexual advocacy is apparently beyond reproach.

Eugene Narrett is an assistant professor of English at Framingham State College and a columnist for the Middlesex News.

Letter From England

by Derrick Turner

The British Buchananites

◆

The present long period of Conservative Party rule in Britain, which has now endured for almost 16 years, has fooled many into believing that we live in a right-wing, conservative country. Even moderate leftists sometimes declaim against the "Tory regime," the fascistic conspiracy they believe deliberately excludes or discommodes their various pet minorities. The white, middle-class, old Etonian, pinstripe-suited, club-going male who allegedly controls Britain is still Public Enemy Number One, in many people's eyes, and is still someone definitely worth hating.

The truth, of course, is rather different. The old "ruling class" has long been eclipsed (although it persists in corners), and British unity and culture is still threatened. Many conservatives understand this, and survey the smoking ruins with sadness and disgust, thinking, with the hymn-writer, that "Change and decay in all around I see." Just as in the United States, a small minority of these truly conservative conservatives actively campaign for a dispensation that might afford greater protection to our heritage. These assorted campaigners differ greatly in kind, resources, and aims, and rarely work in tandem. But they have certain things in common—an implicit or explicit belief in the principles of hierarchy and historical legitimacy, romantic patriotism, and a sense that there is too much liberalism in daily life, which they feel exacerbates crime, overinflates egos, rewards bad behavior, and lowers all kinds of generally accepted standards.

In Britain, according to J.R. Jones in *The European Right*, "The task of the Right has not been to formulate new principles or develop new political systems, but to try to ensure that the Tory Party followed and practiced those it had inherited from the past, but which its leaders tended to neglect or evade." Even new right-wing ideas are usually couched in conservative language and launched from within conservative groupings—from Disraeli's "On Nation" and Joseph Chamberlain's "Imperial

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Preference" campaigners to the Thatcherites, Powellites, and so-called "Euroskeptics" of the present day. Far rightists have never had much success in Britain, not even in the 1930's, when all of Europe except England seemed full of same-shirted cohorts doing calisthenics. The British do not much like excitable ideologues, but like their statesmen "weathered and polished, like old wood," as André Maurois noted in his *Disraeli*.

The conservative right is disdainful of abstraction and intellectually untidy. Eminently practical, it is more interested in what is, than in what might be. Many conservatives stay as far away as possible from *ideas*, in favor of nostalgic attachments and pragmatic practices, foolishly believing that if they control the Ministry of Defense and the Treasury, everything else can take care of itself. Conservatives are less interested in comprehensive explanations or intellectual tours de force than in having a quiet life.

The Conservative and Unionist Party, ostensibly the main instrument of political conservatism, is sorely divided between liberals who are in power and more traditionalist Tories who make up the bulk of the party membership and Conservative voters. This is particularly noticeable at Conference time, when the delegates on the floor of the conference hall might as well belong to a different party, so far are they removed from those on the platform. Corporate donations are drying up, and the Duke of Westminster, one of the richest men in Britain, no longer gives to the party, in protest at a property law reform. The party is some £16 million in debt, is losing members rapidly, and is at its lowest-ever standing in the opinion polls.

Eight M.P.s, all of them opponents of European union, recently had the Whip taken away from them, for courageously voting against the government on increased E.C. funding (and one other resigned the Whip at the same time), which has put the government into a minority position on many of those inconspicuous cross-party committees that determine governmental policies and strategy. This leaves the conservative right with some room to maneuver, and makes its central argument—that the government is in trouble because it is insufficiently conservative—that much more credible.

There are several small-c conservative groups outside the party proper. One such organization, the Freedom Association, hit the headlines when it tried to have Douglas Hurd arraigned for treason, for being a signatory to the Maastricht Treaty. Industrialist Sir James Goldsmith's new book, *The Trap*, which argues against free trade, has caused ripples, and he has set up a London branch of his Referendum Party. There are various single-issue groups which, although not party-political, are made up of people with broadly conservative views, respectively campaigning to preserve the old Prayer Book, defend the monarchy, fight against European union, protect British culture, return to traditional teaching methods, and retain blood sports. There are many conservative commentators in the newspapers, although not on television, all the way across the spectrum from the populist *Sun* to the broadsheet *Sunday Telegraph*. There are two quarterly conservative magazines, the intellectual, influential *Salisbury Review* and the intelligent, if more polemical, *Right Now!* However, the main impetus for the political (as opposed to metapolitical) right-wing movement is within the party itself, where a multiplicity of groups continue agitating for sterner policies, especially on crime, Europe, and immigration.

One of the Whip-less M.P.s, Bill Cash, organizes a lobby group called The European Foundation and publishes an informative magazine called *The European Journal*. There are other fairly influential single-issue groups within the party, like the Conservative Family Campaign, which lobbies for laws protecting the family, and the Conservative Christian Fellowship, whose members want to invest (or re-invest) the party with a Christian sensibility. Thatcherite groups, like the Bruges Group (so named because of a strongly antifederalist speech Margaret Thatcher once made in the Flemish town), the No Turning Back Group, and Conservative Way Forward, continue to promulgate the gospel of Thatcherism to the party, where many members retain great affection for "Maggie." Many other right-of-center groups are strongly influenced by Thatcherism, like the Selsdon Group (named after the hotel whence they issued the 1973 "Selsdon Declaration"), the Young Conservatives (so bumptious that the Conservative Central Office is threatening to dissolve the organization, as they did the Federation of Conservative Students), and the National Association of Conservative Graduates (of which Lady Thatcher is Patroness).

The other great British conservative is J. Enoch Powell, now, regrettably, in his 80's, but as lucid as ever. He enunciates a genuine Tory strain within the party, wedded to tradition, classicism, and constitution, and threw away a promising career by making a famous speech (colloquially known as the "rivers of blood" speech) alluding to the possible adverse consequences of Commonwealth immigration. He has influenced, and continues to influence, several groups on the Tory right. The best known is the Monday Club, formed in response to Harold Macmillan's famous "winds of change" speech, which presaged the banishing of South Africa from the Commonwealth. Although dormant in recent years, it has recently been bequeathed £100,000, so may again rise to prominence. Other groups, like the London Swinton Circle (named after the college where prospective conservative M.P.s were once tutored), Tory Action (founded in 1974 by the former deputy head of MI6), and Right Ahead, exist to "hear and question Conservatives and Ulster Unionists" and generally keep them on the *qui vive*.

In theory, this is great conservative strength, which makes it all the more remarkable that the country has been given up to the Vandals. But conservatives in Britain, as everywhere, are working against the tide of history, which is for homogenization, uniformity, universalism, collectivism, and millenarianism, and our complex philosophy is not easily reduced to slogans. British conservatives are also overfond of reaction and not fond enough of ratiocination, are isolated within the institutions captured by Marxists and now held by their descendants, and, most importantly, are accustomed to losing. Ever since Bonnie Prince Charlie, British conservatives have been on the defeated side, and the consciousness of this has made them defensive; they have none of that self-confidence and self-righteousness without which there can be no ultimate victory. Without recapturing such confidence through local victories, without a long, painful, counteroffensive back through the institutions, British conservatism can be nothing more than a holding operation, a valiant but ultimately vain attempt to salvage some fragments of England from the rising, swirling waters.

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EDUCATION

Humanities and the Cutting Edge

by Sanford Pinsker

There are whole afternoons when a part of me wishes I had paid more attention in Bio 100 because then I might have ended up in cancer research, where being on the cutting edge makes sense. But for better or worse, I settled on literary criticism, a "discipline" that wears inverted commas around its neck like an albatross. Granted, my field does not want for practitioners who know the buzzwords that will make a dean's eyes twinkle and that might even get the attention of a foundation: "discourse analysis" and the "social construction of reality," hegemony and hermeneutics. They are currently the coin of our little realm, but there's always the awful moment when even those who bandy them about must wonder if the people who wear the lab coats aren't snickering.

After all, what would be the point of cancer research that plodded along 20 years behind the curve, or chemistry experiments done without laser microscopes? Science that isn't "on the cutting edge"—which is to say, science that isn't up-to-date and progressive—just isn't, well, *science*. And I say this as a diabetic who knows that a cure isn't likely to come from my end of the faculty aisle.

Worse, professors in the hard sciences know—or at least seem to know—what they're about, so it's no wonder I can work myself into fits of jealousy when I think about how easy it must be for, say, chemistry professors to design an appropriate curriculum for their majors: Chem I is followed by Chem II, and then—not surprisingly—by Chem III and Chem IV. Granted, they sometimes tip their hats in our direction for providing the Roman numerals that give their catalog entries a classy touch, but most of the time they are too busy writing NSA grants to get newfangled equipment or protecting their budget lines to care.

Meanwhile, those of us in the humanities muddle on, some willing to argue that studying the human mystery still makes sense, while others insist that we must be on the cutting edge. The latter camp is sexier, of course, and it comes armed with language thick enough to stop a SCUD; but the game they're running is essentially a hustle. For the truth, as our most significant writers have always known, is that there *are* no new truths, but rather, older ones we rediscover again and again as the rhythms of Sophocles and Homer, Shakespeare and the Bible, dramatically remind us of our collective human fate. The writers who last, who always surprise and continually delight, go through *us*, rather than the other way around. They liberate the individual in ways that those with specific agendas and large claims about social transformation will never understand.

Indeed, once one gets past the rhetorical smoke screens about how important it is to read texts (they are never simply novels or plays or poems) "against the grain" or why efforts of the imagination count for less than arguments about how this or that writer was socially constructed, what we are left with is a grab bag of theories that can be applied to anything—*Hamlet* or a hoagie, *comedia del arte* or a comic book, Cervantes or a cereal box. No doubt the game has its own delights, especially for those with ingenuity and a conviction that the humanities have little if anything to do with human beings. Small wonder that their prose seems so bloodless, and their arguments so entirely divorced from the lives people actually live and care about. The cutting edge may "cut," but I would argue that it doesn't *bleed*.

Meanwhile, most students know snake oil when they see it. True enough, they will throw around high-tech words, if a professor insists on them—grades are, after all, *grades*—but to twist a line from Robert Frost, something there is that doesn't love an impenetrable wall of jawbreakers. They want—yea, they *deserve*—better. And that's why I will risk belaboring a case for putting the "human" back into the humanities—knowing full well how unfashionable it is to talk about the soul's need, much less to acknowledge how desperate our students are for even a scrap of plain truth. But such matters have always been among the central concerns of the humanities.

Where, then, does this leave those of us *not* on the cutting edge—especially if the race in the next century will go to the country best able to produce efficient, cost-effective conductors? Better off than you might imagine, for if my hunch about *human* knowledge, something acquired in the most unlikely of places—a class on Plato's *Republic* or Homer's *Odyssey*, Wordsworth's poetry or Hawthorne's short stories—is even half true, we will need humanists aplenty in the next decades. Not because they can explain how it is that an author's name should be surrounded by qualifying quotation marks (as if social constructions entirely created them, rather than the other way around) or because they can see the invisible hand of hegemonic forces where none exist; but because they will have a better sense of irony and incongruity, paradox and ambivalence, than most. Moreover, they are likely to know something of the delicate equation between the fullest use of private time and the obligations of the public person. The marketplace will find proper uses for such talents, but even more important, quick studies in the human condition will discover that a college education has prepared them for wider educations.

In this sense, one might argue that the *real* cutting edge is wherever one happens to be—whether at a local school board meeting discussing which books should, or should not, be on the shelves of a junior high school library; supporting a local theater company; or simply deciding which magazines warrant a subscription. Seen this way, the humanities is nothing more nor less than a continuing curiosity about what makes people tick, as viewed against the record of human interaction called History. New vocabularies may—just may—increase our understanding; they will certainly

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provide more models for our ongoing efforts at modeling. But whether the subject is the claims of Self as pitted against the requirements of Society, the folly of vaulting ambition, or the tensions that set sons against fathers, one generation against another, we have yet to improve on the question Socrates posed so long ago—namely, how should a good person live? Finding the answer is the work of a lifetime, one spent in the pursuit of truth, even as one knows, in the words of poet William Stafford, that "truth has a long and complicated name."

Those heavy with theory and convinced about the wisdom of their social agendas go through texts with an enviable certainty; but I do not often feel that stories and poems go through *them*. And when they boast about how intellectually exciting life is on the humanities' cutting edge, I have my doubts, not only because they have swapped human richness for a mess of pottage, but also because the humanities give us reason to pause rather than occasions to crow.

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The Music of Chance—An APA Diary

by John E. MacKinnon

Any young philosopher who aspires to an academic career must, especially in these days of fiscal restraint and feminized privilege, include in his plans a trip to the annual American Philosophical Association (APA) Convention, a curious hybrid of frenetic job-hunting and highbrow hobnobbing widely reviled as "the meat market." Although Pacific and Central Divisions of the APA convene annual meetings, the East Coast gathering is especially crucial, following as it does on the heels of the first significant round of job announcements. The 1994 session was held in Boston at Copley Place, December 27-30.

Arrangements run roughly as follows: philosophy departments with positions to fill advertise in the APA publication, "Jobs for Philosophers." Young candidates review these positions and apply for those for which they are suitably qualified in the hope that they'll be interviewed at the convention itself. Their turkey barely digested, they travel to Boston on the 27th, check into a prebooked room, register, and are assigned individual numbered files, located, along with a couple of thousand others, in the so-called Placement Centre. Ordinarily, interviewing institutions will have contacted those candidates whom they intend to interview *prior* to the conference. However, such arrangements are sometimes made at the conference itself, by means of completed forms placed in the candidate's numbered file.

It is with a certain giddy anticipation, then, that the young philosopher, Ph.D. in pocket, first approaches his file. Will he launch his career in Vermont or Arizona? Will he wow them in Lincoln or Poughkeepsie, Ann Arbor or South Bend? Only too soon will this conjuring of options strike him as fatuous. And, as each visit to the Placement Centre turns up not even so much as a nibble of interest, his giddy anticipation gloomily turns to wishful thinking and sickening swells of self-doubt.

The APA Convention serves the important purpose of ensuring that candidates and department representatives are together in one place for a period of several days so that the arduous and expensive job of interviewing can be handled with relative dispatch. In other respects, however, it constitutes a gruesome spectacle—worthy, I thought, as I boarded the Boston Express out of Portland, Maine, of some surreptitious notetaking.

December 27th, afternoon: I arrive in Boston by noon or so at the Greyhound terminal near South Station. I ask directions of a young man, and he points me in the right direction. I am carrying a heavy rucksack with a makeshift plastic garment bag that protects a suit I bought a year ago, mainly with job interviews in mind. I have yet to wear it, but am confident I will be breaking it in here in Boston.

My friend Emmitt, who is teaching in Kansas, has booked a room under both our names at one of the hotels in Copley Place, the site of the conference. Emmitt will be here both to be interviewed and to conduct interviews on behalf of his department. Therefore, his expenses will be paid by his university, including the room that I will share with him. Since I am broke, this is a great help. Without an ally like Emmitt, the APA would prove all the more daunting.

By 3:00 P.M., Emmitt arrives by taxi from Logan Airport. I have not seen him since an evening three years ago at a friend's room in Christ College, Cambridge, when he returned from Kansas for a visit with his wife, Hannah, and their newborn baby girl. He looks well, slimmer than I remember him. While he changes and freshens up, I pace the room, stopping occasionally to gaze from our 24th-floor window at the Boston skyline. We compare notes on matters both personal and professional.

I wrote my doctoral thesis on aesthetics, a rich and challenging, but sadly neglected, subdiscipline of philosophy. This makes aesthetics my "area of specialty," or "AOS," in APA-speak, even though there is much else that I have studied, taught, and that commands my interest. Of all the positions advertised throughout the United States and Canada, only two are looking for a young scholar with such a background.

Or so I thought. Emmitt tells me that he has heard that one of these positions has fallen through, funding having been denied. "As for the other," he adds, "I hear they're actually looking for someone with a degree in fine arts who has dabbled in philosophy." The second university, apparently, has close ties to some ceramic institute. I momentarily picture a ponytailed potter-cum-philosopher earnestly declaring to a roomful of undergraduates, "You *become* the clay!"

"So they want a philosopher who'll be gracious enough not to trouble his students with philosophy," I say. "It seems," Emmitt replies. This does not augur well. I have applied for another 20 positions or so, but none of them stipulated a preferred AOS. Instead, the positions were declared "open," which means that competition will be especially intense.

December 27th, evening: Having preregistered, Emmitt and I collect our name tags and conference programs and head over to the Placement Centre in the Westin Hotel. This is only a scouting expedition, to get the lay of the land, to anticipate tomorrow's movements. On the back of our name tags is stamped a number that corresponds to individual manila file folders reserved for us at the Placement Centre. We both find our

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files empty, but, as yet, this is no concern. As is indicated by the mere handful of pink slips pinned to a large bulletin board, representatives from most of the universities that will be conducting interviews have yet to arrive. They will be doing so later tonight or tomorrow. Unlike Emmitt, I have no prearranged interviews. But since I was visiting England during the two-week period when recruiting departments were phoning candidates, I assume, as does Emmitt, that those who are interested in talking to me will simply contact me here by leaving a note in my file.

After a bottle of Pete's Wicked Ale at a bar on Boylston Street, I return to my room and watch a preview of holiday bowl games on ESPN, the last half of "NYPD Blue," and the local news. My head is pounding. I scribble a postcard to my girlfriend in England. The prospects of her joining me in North America, at least in the foreseeable future, depend in large part on my fortunes here. At this stage, I figure, no news is good news.

December 28th, morning: We get our wake-up call at 7:30 A.M., stretch, wash, and dress, then head out for breakfast. As we stand around waiting for the elevator, Emmitt, a veteran of these conferences, tells me that if my file in the Placement Centre has no requests for interviews in it by late this afternoon, my prospects don't look good. It sounds ominous and almost callously matter-of-fact, but I appreciate his seasoned assessment. For the first time, I feel vaguely despondent. "God," I wheeze absently to Emmitt, "I wonder if I'll attract any notice at all." A moment passes before we look at each other and chuckle. Inadvertently, my remark has at once captured and caricatured the nature of the relationship between desperate job-seeker and disdainfully persnickety institution, as if the one were a tart by the roadside, showing a bit of leg to the other, hoping to hitchhike her way to tenure-track bliss.

After breakfast in the hotel restaurant, we leave for the Placement Centre. It's 11:00 A.M., when the APA is at its most hideous. Anxious, milling academics, tired of life in Lubbock, Dubuque, or Kalamazoo, frustrated by years of taxing doctoral work and thankless part-time lecturing, check their numbered files with damp, fretting fingers, their roving eyes comparing fortunes. Like me.

"Nothing in mine," says Emmitt.

Nor mine, I find.

I check the message board, now full of pink slips. All have a check next to the line, "prearranged interviews only." Emmitt has one such interview with a Midwest college. I shake his hand and wish him good luck.

Although the possibility remains that I'll be contacted later in the day, I am not hopeful. And however much I prepared myself for the possibility of having no interviews, I cannot help but feel disappointed. Since this is also the APA at its most voyeuristic, I tell myself not to give too much away, not to appear too flustered, not to gulp too dryly, not to avoid making eye contact too unnaturally. After all, I tell myself, it's a ferociously competitive market. Times are tough, political shenanigans abound. It's not *me*.

Still, what am I going to *do*? Like all the other luckless ones, I make a sort of stammering retreat, trying pitifully to maintain an air of defiant pride as I make my way back out into the crowded foyer and down the escalator.

December 28th, early afternoon: In a chair by the window, I sit morosely pondering. A cleaning lady arrives. She is a Salvadoran named Rosa who, though a resident in the United States for five years, has trouble with English. After a moment or two of tortured conversation, I leave to take in the Publishers' Exhibit on the third floor. Wandering from bookstall to bookstall will provide solace, I figure. Here, I can forget about all the ignored applications, unrequited interest, and phantom interviews.

I collect catalogues at the display booths of various university presses, lingering in particular at Penn State and Cornell. At the latter, I half hope that the press rep will approach me, sensing a sale. I imagine casually mentioning to him that two of my friends have recently published books with Cornell and are prominently featured in their glossy catalogue, to which he replies snidely, "Hey, that almost makes you famous." But he doesn't approach and I'm relieved.

At the Hackett booth, the press rep asks if he can be of service. I ask him the price of one of the displayed books. He says, "$12.95 ordinarily, but only $9.50 at the professional rate." I find this mildly reassuring. I am, in spite of everything, a pro.

December 28th, mid-afternoon: At 3:15 P.M., it's time to return to the Placement Centre. I approach file #213. Still nothing. I can't get over it, although I'm not quite sure what it is that I can't get over: the lack of response to my applications or my naively having expected any response at all. Self-consciously, I head back out as quickly as I came in. A gaggle of crumpled tweed and designer stubble huddles in earnest conversation while others scribble information from notes posted on a large bulletin board before racing headlong back to their files. This contrast between near-masonic etiquette and creeping anxiety is curious. One might say symptomatic.

At the top of the escalator, I notice the familiar face of Ray, another friend from Cambridge. We have not seen each other since he lent me his chilly flat on Portugal Place while he went off to do research in Germany. Handsome in his shirt, tie, and brown tweed jacket, he seems flustered. He has an interview, he says, with a small teaching college in Michigan. Since he has yet to register, I walk back with him to the registration desk on the fourth floor of the Marriott. We agree to meet near the hotel restaurant at 5:00 P.M. and grab a coffee. But when he shows up he looks shattered.

"Horrible," he says in a parched monotone. "They spent most of the time telling me how ugly the campus is, how congested the area is, how big my classes would be, how bad the students are, and how little they pay." Rather absently, he introduces me to a woman named Phoebe who has a sabbatical-replacement appointment in Winnipeg. She asks me, "Any luck?" I say, "Not at all. Not a single interview. How 'bout you?"

"Five," she answers brightly.

I have always been told that applicants do extremely well at the APA if they get two or three interviews. Eyebrows raised, I grudgingly reply, "That's *something*," before adding, more generously, "Good for you."

"This isn't for me," Ray laments, his eyes fixed on some indistinct point on the mezzanine wall. "You know," he says, addressing me more firmly, "I've been thinking of leaving this behind completely. Maybe teach at a private school or something."

"Yeah," I reply, unsurprised, having thought similar thoughts.

December 28th, evening: Back in the room, Emmitt tells me he will be meeting a couple of department mates for supper at the Atlantic Fish Company on Boylston and invites me along. I'd love to, but decline. I have friends to visit.

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Warren completed his doctoral work at Cambridge a couple of years before me and recently published an expanded version of his thesis with Oxford University Press. He is spending the current year as a research fellow at some Harvard institute, living with his wife and children in Somerville. It will be good to see them.

Their apartment is small, ugly, overheated, and expensive. Warren, Milly, and I eat and catch up with one another. Warren enjoys Boston and the institute to which he is attached, but is amazed at the poor pay. Milly, who doesn't care for big cities as a rule, feels a bit isolated and misses her job in England, but she is not unhappy. They have just had their second child, a girl, who lies sleeping in a crib. Warren says he will apply for whatever jobs are available at North American universities while they are here. But there are few openings in his discipline, so they expect to return to Britain by early summer.

We are all tired, so at 10:00 P.M. I get up to leave. Warren takes the elevator down with me to the cramped lobby. We shake hands and offer each other parting words of encouragement. We wonder where our paths will next converge.

It is breezy but mild as I walk back to the subway station. Red Line, Green Line, out at Copley Square. Back in the hotel room, I turn on ESPN. Emmitt turns up an hour later with a bottle of bourbon. I've never developed a taste for this stuff, but I accept a glass, on the rocks. He shares with me a conversation that he had earlier in the evening with a woman at the APA Smoker. Noting that of the 11 candidates shortlisted for a position at her respected New York college, seven were women, she concluded with smug triumph, "I can't see *this* job going to a man."

Emmitt and I conservatively estimate that women candidates are outnumbered here by four or five to one. "Seven out of eleven," I repeat groggily, and report to him the happy debut of Phoebe from Winnipeg. I take a stiff swig of bourbon and spend the next few minutes wetly convulsing.

December 29th, morning: After waking and washing, Emmitt and I say goodbye. He is off for the first of two days of conducting interviews of candidates for a philosophy of science position at his university in Kansas. By the time he gets back, I'll be gone.

I phone Greyhound to get departure times for the Boston-Portland bus. All along I'd been planning on taking the last bus tonight or an early one tomorrow. Now is the time, however, to bring my affairs here to a marginally dignified close. I decide on the 4:00 P.M. bus. I scribble two postcards to my girlfriend, one of the Quincy Market in winter, the other a summer sunset in Boston Harbor. We were both hoping for big things in Boston. She'll be as disappointed as I am.

At about noon, the phone rings. It's Gord, who held a sessional appointment in the same department where I'd taught part-time the previous year. We arrange to meet for lunch. Half an hour later, we're together in the Westin working our way through bowls of buttery clam chowder. He appears to have done reasonably well here, delivering a paper and being interviewed for two philosophy jobs in the Southwest.

In mid-gulp, I spot a familiar face whose eyes catch mine just in time. It's Vincent, a friend from Montreal and Cambridge. Having finished his doctorate and, more recently, a research fellowship at Jesus College, he is eager to return to North America. So far, he's been turned down for interviews everywhere, except for one this afternoon with Maryland. We update one another about mutual friends in Vancouver and Halifax. Then he's on his way.

Gord kindly offers to drive me to the bus station, so I retrieve my belongings from my room and meet him down at the semicircular drive outside the Westin. At the Greyhound terminal near South Station, we say goodbye. The bus driver allows the passengers on early, which is a blessing. It must be 20 degrees with the windchill. I ride back to Portland in the falling dark.

January 2, 1995: A dark morning in southern Maine. Heavy snow. After morning coffee, I return to my basement bedroom to sort through old boxes. After the snow stops, I join Dad and Ron in shoveling the driveway and the mailman's path. The late afternoon sky is a smoky coral tinged with scarlet. Inside, toes frozen, we have tea, watch a *Simpsons* rerun, and sit down to cabbage rolls for supper.

At 9:00 P.M., I'm listening to a musty old album by Eric Andersen when Carol Ann calls and invites me to watch a movie on PBS. It's called *The Music of Chance*, starring James Spader and Mandy Patinkin. Spader plays Jim, a sleazy, loping cardsharp, while Patinkin plays a stalwart fellow named Nash, a man of patience, humor, and culture. After a chance meeting, they find themselves playing high-stakes poker with a pair of wealthy eccentrics. Confident in his virtuosity, Jim is mortified when, playing for himself *and* Nash, he loses everything, including Nash's car. In a panicky effort to recoup their losses, he manages only to fall deeply into debt, to the tune of $10,000. In order to repay the money, they strike a deal with their hosts, agreeing to build a stone wall across an empty field on their estate.

A few weeks into the labor, Jim, tired, indignant, and humiliated, proposes that he and Nash make a run for it. But Nash calmly shrugs. A deal's a deal. He's lost everything, he explains. He and Jim took a chance and it didn't pay off. But things could be worse. And the wall is already half-finished. In the meantime, they must make the best of the situation. You pays your nickels, you takes your choice. One door closes so another will open.

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Remembering Christopher Lasch

by Ralph A. Raimi

Christopher Lasch, who for many years served as chairman of the history department at the University of Rochester and who was famous for his commentaries on American social history, including such books as *The Culture of Narcissism* and *Haven in a Heartless World*, died in March 1994 at the age of 61. Those who knew him only through his printed works knew one sort of person, and those who had personal dealings with him knew another. Those who, like many of his colleagues here, knew both the man and his works, sometimes had trouble reconciling Christopher Lasch, the author, with "Kit Lasch," the gentle and soft-spoken professor.

His books were bitter and ironic; he saw a world on the edge of collapse.

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Where it was poor, people were starving or killing one another for bread. Where it was rich, it squandered its substance on cars and houses and calories—all unneeded—urged on by what he saw as dishonest advertisers using the latest scientific brainwashing techniques. And while the well-to-do spent their evenings and weekends mindlessly watching television, or pursuing an elusive security, whether of finance or of love, the poor in our country, while doing much the same (though with smaller cars and houses), were being taught by the producers of televised love and death to envy their richer neighbors and maybe even to kill them.

Lasch began his academic career as a socialist of the "New Left," an ill-defined term even in the 60's. However, as experience mounted, and the 60's and 70's wore on into the 80's and 90's, as the simplicities of the socialist ideal grew ever more suspect, it became impossible to place Christopher Lasch into a neat "right" or "left" political camp. What he remained was a radical, however; he saw our conventions and traditions ever changing for the worse, and he believed that superficial solutions were not going to restore the self-discipline and responsibility essential to a good society. What that radical solution might be, he never quite said; he was a social critic, not a social revolutionary. His home was in the university, not the streets.

Yet, Puritan as were his ideals, in person Kit Lasch was kindly and considerate. If everyone in the world were like him (this is my belief, not his) our social troubles would soon be over. The rage you could read in his writings came across only as disappointment when you met him in person. Mention some awful stupidity in public life, the hypocrisy of some public official, say, or the selling of arms to some dangerous Third World thug, and Kit Lasch would smile an embarrassed smile, as if shrugging his shoulders: "What do you expect?" or "Isn't that the way of it?" He might not have said those things in so many words, but the impression you carried away was resignation and sorrow, rather than anger and a program for changing the world by next Tuesday.

While Lasch was usually bitter in print and sweet in person, there were times when the two could be combined, and one such occasion was the retirement of Abraham Karp, professor of history and religion and well known to many in our city for a long time, since he had been rabbi of the Conservative Temple Beth El in a well-to-do Rochester suburb for years before coming to the university. Even at Beth El he had been a scholar, difficult as that was in a world where he had to deal with boards of directors and donors of funds; so that when a chair in religion was offered him by the university he accepted with gladness; and he served us well for nearly 20 years.

It is the custom, on the last faculty meeting of the academic year, for the chairman of the department from which a professor retires to read a "minute" on the departing professor, an appreciation of his work, a sort of eulogy and farewell. In 1991 Professor Karp retired and moved away from Rochester, and at the May faculty meeting, Professor Lasch, as chairman of Karp's department, rose to speak.

"Abe Karp, who retires this year," he began, and we all settled back to hear the usual recital. Fine scholarship, irreplaceable loss, farewell; we hear it every year. For a while, that's the way it went. "His books include . . . *The Golden Door to America: The Jewish Immigrant Experience* and *Haven and Home*. This last work, a magisterial synthesis of Abe's earlier studies . . . " Yes, yes, what fine things come out of the University of Rochester. Aren't we wonderful.

But listen to this (Lasch continued speaking): "Indeed Abe is not . . . one to disguise his views in the language of academic indirection. . . . He never subscribed to the academic community's often inflated sense of its own importance, or regarded university politics as the earth-shaking events we often imagine them to be. . . . All his work at the University of Rochester testified to a profound love of learning, coupled with a healthy skepticism about the proposition that academic institutions are alone in their devotion to learning or their ability to foster it. *It was a growing suspicion that they were losing their claim even to preeminence, in this regard, that reconciled Abe to retirement*—made him look forward to it, in fact, as an occasion not to be regretted but to be welcomed and savored."

The language is elegant but the judgment is harsh. Karp, according to Lasch, had come to believe that scholarship, teaching, and learning were better fostered, better accomplished, outside the universities than inside. Karp would be happier in retirement, continuing his scholarly work away from universities, than he could be in what he had come to regard as a stifling environment at the university.

Now I myself do not believe this, at least not 100 percent. There is a New York Public Library and a Library of Congress, yes, and one can read and write in a desk and chair there or at home, but these environments are not sufficient to replace the scholarship that would be lost if we closed the universities or turned them into super high schools devoted to "teaching" without research.

The very word "college" explains what is missing in the world of the solitary scholar. A college is a *collection* of people, working together. For his own knowledge to advance, the mathematician (say) must have other mathematicians to talk to day after day, and to listen to. And some nonmathematicians as well. Books and hard work are not enough. The same is true of historians and others, and even more so for scientists who need laboratories. From the Middle Ages on, the presence of students has always been half the value of the collegial environment, quite apart from the "lessons" students pay to get from us. The progress of scholarship itself is advanced by them as well as by their masters. Developing his ideas for a group of students is the surest way for the scholar to understand what he himself is doing, and to find out its errors. As Joubert has written, "To teach is to learn twice."

Abe Karp understood all this very well, but was so distressed at what was happening in the universities in his time (and it has been growing worse) that it was a downright pleasure for him to retire to solitary scholarship instead. Kit Lasch understood that distress, and used the occasion of Karp's retirement to mention it to his colleagues.

When I wrote Lasch a note on his observations, he replied in typical pessimistic fashion: he said he believed I was the only one who had noticed. Those few faculty members who were even there to hear Lasch's speech that day had probably tuned out, hearing only what they expected to hear. It ain't quite so, said Lasch, but he said it so mildly that I had trouble believing what I had heard. I even sent to the Secretary of the faculty for a copy of Lasch's remarks, just to make sure. Yes, I had heard correctly; yes, hardly anyone there had paid attention.

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The delicacy of Lasch's characterization of Karp's attitude was, I fancy, partly because he was saying it in person (Lasch was always ceremonious and gentle in person), but also because he was attributing the sentiment to Abe Karp, and would not have wanted to attribute a really extreme opinion to another person. Had Lasch put this idea into one of his own books, and into his own (written) voice, it would have come out as a blast, a firestorm, against what both Karp and Lasch, and many of the rest of us, observe as a dangerous development growing from within the college faculties of our time.

To explain what that misfortune actually is would require a more leisurely format than the present comment allows. Its major aspects are probably well known to readers of this journal, though one more recent development, the subject of the book *Higher Superstition* by Gross and Levitt (Johns Hopkins, 1994), is as yet little known, especially to the general public. It is a kind of populist assault on science, which, though affecting a philosophical or sociological rationale, is politically motivated and draws on a combination of recent ideologies, from feminism and Afrocentrism to rather technical developments in philosophy, art criticism, and academic crannies even less likely than these.

The war on the intellect usually proceeds under the cover of some humanitarian ideal, setting up false conflicts, exalting "feeling" over (cold) judgment, for example, or the love of one's homeless neighbor over scientific truth; but there is more to the phenomenon than two or three "isms" that happen to be going around this year. The attack has in fact always been with us, coming from one place if not the other, now the state, now the church, sometimes the military, sometimes an aristocracy, sometimes a populist movement.

In recent centuries, surely since the time of Galileo, scholars have wanted their universities to be a defense against this attack, and have sometimes been successful. Today, alas, no one is louder in claiming liberty in the pursuit of truth and beauty than those enemies, academics themselves, who are putting to the pillory their errant colleagues. (While at the same time announcing, some of them, a proof that truth and beauty cannot exist.)

The university, in other words, has itself become a source of danger to its announced ideals. This is what Kit Lasch was saying, as Abe Karp was escaping into retirement. Karp, to be sure, was old enough and prosperous enough to do that, but where shall his successors go, who still need the goodwill and encouragement of open-minded colleagues and students?

Ralph A. Raimi is a professor of mathematics at the University of Rochester.

Eccentricity as Education

by Geoffrey Wagner

"Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ Church." Samuel Johnson, Boswell's *Life*.

Though perhaps not with Canon Jenkins.

Universities are, or should be, the last refuge of great eccentrics who emphasize our humdrum norms. Such I discovered when I went up to Henry VIII's 1545 refounding of Wolsey's Cardinal College. The monarch's action established Christ Church as an Oxford college, its Cathedral diocesan. There were thus a plethora of Canons about, who had no particular duties at all. These included in my time Claude Jenkins, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, who used to pour soda water into his coffee, rimming his sleeves with a corrosive snuff that produced paroxysms in the Senior Common Room. The dons who descended to mere teaching were termed "students." This occasioned me some minor embarrassment when applying to the philosophy department at Columbia University, whose dean of admissions (the late Hans Rosenhaupt) informed me that a letter of recommendation from a mere student wouldn't do. My tutor, Frank Taylor, was well into his 70's when he signed himself "Student" on my behalf.

Aside from terminology, that Oxford came back to haunt me when my American students became infected with a vogue for J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *Lord of the Rings*, my language tutor whom I hoped to have forgotten forever. For, frankly, the lugubrious Tolkien was about the most boring man I ever listened to, though I must confess that his subject, Anglo-Saxon, didn't exactly electrify one, with its vowel changes into Middle English which one had to regurgitate in one's final *viva*. Tolkien perfected a *sauve-qui-peut* method of delivering his lectures in a whisper so that by the second week of term only about half a dozen *Beowulf* hysterics were left in the front row. I later tried the technique myself at City College and it didn't work, finally compelling me to put a notice on my office door: NO MORE ELVES. C.S. Lewis has also been resuscitated, thanks to a recent movie about his extracurricular activities with Joy Gresham. Together with Ken Tynan and Martin Routh (who carried a hooded falcon on one elbow), I sat in at his lectures too, mostly flat jokes about Screwtape. None of these, however, held a candle to Canon Jenkins, a man my father, an old grad, enjoined me to listen to even if I did naught else at Oxford. Then aged 92, Jenkins was not only inaudible but incomprehensible.

The man died in Tunbridge Wells in 1959 with two teeth in his head and some 40,000 books strewn in disorder about his palatial rooms overlooking our main Tom Quad, quarters into which he had somehow contrived to secret his senile mother, disallowing any servants (scouts, in our term) in to clean. "His mind, like his house," Dean Mascoll put it, "resembled a vast wastepaper basket." In the garden outside it, equally unkempt, he installed a bird sanctuary and, as pet, a vicious stoat (subsequently dealt with by the dean's cat). Eventually, his chambers became so disgusting the college authorities had to force in workmen on the grounds of correcting dry-rot.

I saw something of this establishment when, returning from war service, a fellow undergraduate and I wished to use the court tennis facility in neighboring Oriel College (one of a mere 20 in the British Isles), only to find it encumbered by the Canon's vast library which he had stored there to avoid bombing. At considerable labor we barrowed the books over to him, shoving through the blocked main entrance and dodging cascades of them in various corners. The bath was a repository for secondhand Victorian parish histories and the like, a number clearly "porrowed" (my portmanteau word for permanently borrowed) from sundry libraries. It was certainly some time before the afflatus of the bibliomane could be replaced by good hon-

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est sweat in that tennis court.

First and foremost the learned Canon was blessed with a prodigious appetite. Having said grace in Hall, under the gaze of Holbein's Henry VIII, his wave of the hands would have adroitly secreted several spoils of the table into various pockets, for consumption in his rooms later. To the college's buffet lunches he brought with him a large scarf for the same purpose. Equal grist to the mill, gorgonzola found its way into filthy handkerchiefs, already stinking of snuff, while his pipe was a prewar Woolworth article filled with an unspeakable mixture of rotting leaves and old street butts. Biscuits, nuts, olives were all fair game, for he was not constrained by the observation of colleagues or even the Governing Body. In fact, Dean Mascoll recalls him at a Vice Chancellor's garden party "in his full doctoral scarlet, secreting cream buns in the pockets of his cassock." A pile of food was once found under his High Table chair, clearly dropped from his gown pockets. He used purloined toast as a bookmark, sleeping through sermons and sliding off his seat in clothes secured haphazardly by large laundry pins. Royal visits he treated with extreme condescension while some of us will still remember attending a Cathedral service only to be alerted by the delightful giggles of the choirboys in front—at what? At Canon Jenkins, bent and frail, walking over to the lectern with pounds of sugar cascading from his cassock.

Whether he was an unselfconscious or planned eccentric surely hardly matters. For in an increasingly industrialized and electronic world, we must surely cherish his like.

Geoffrey Wagner is professor emeritus of English at the City University of New York.

In Praise of Inexcellence

by Clinton W. Trowbridge

"If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly," said G.K. Chesterton.

All that talk about being the best is Olympic fever, ad hype. If everyone were the best, where would the rest of us be? In sports this is obvious. Perhaps not so much so in advanced nuclear physics. The guy next to me in the pool can swim as he pleases. If he's flying the plane, OK, he better be good. But even in areas where we have a right to expect expertise, we should regard the top as more of a plateau than a peak. After all, there's the copilot. He could be flying the plane. A suitable proficiency, then, in those areas. But for the others, cool your buns.

Take marriage, for instance. I had a friend in school who was perfect at everything. He took *all* the prizes at graduation. He got married, and then he got divorced. I asked him what the problem was. "It was a C- affair," he said. What I thought later and wished I'd said was, "But that's passing!"

Settling for a C- is important if you're, say, studying an instrument. I took lessons on the cello for several years and got far enough to enjoy scraping out *Eine Kleine Nacht* with some other hackers. Then one summer a pro got hold of me and said, in effect, do you want to slop along like this or study eight hours a day with me and perhaps become good? "Slop along," I said, after hardly any thought. I'm not arguing for the second-rate. I'm just saying that at this moment in history people have got the idea that if they can't outwit the Japanese, they better perfect their *hari-kari*.

What if every writer put himself up against Shakespeare? Every painter Rembrandt? Every billionaire Perot? Faith has blurry vision, hope a poor memory, determination a low I.Q. Experience ruminates; youth jumps in.

But surely we should strive at all times toward our personal best? Tell me. What is that when one is observing clouds? "I loaf and invite my soul." Whitman. Politically incorrect language but the right point. Observation is only possible in detachment. One understands by holding an idea in the palm of one's mind.

In areas that apply, then. There, you must admit, excellence is what we want. Yes, but what are those areas? Not sports. (Man has the inalienable right to play—badly.) Not art. Not human relations. Science? (Unless you're a child—or a child-like adult—with your first, or 31st, chemistry set.) Business? (As measured by salary or service?) Politics? Finally. Hold every man and woman and child to accountable political excellence by all means. Bankers, also. Jewelers. Restaurateurs. May I suggest a maxim? "Excellence is the expected, anticipated object of all activities in which excellence is advertised and thus required." Doesn't that cover it? At least adequately?

Clinton W. Trowbridge writes from Sedgwick, Maine.

MILITARY

The Green Barrettes

by R. Cort Kirkwood

For 200 years, American fighting men have gone into battle without women. George Washington conquered the British at Yorktown without women. Grant defeated Lee without women. Marines raised the flag on Iwo Jima without women. But those fellows must have been made of sterner stuff than men today. Now, apparently, the men can't hack it, at least if you believe the captains of the Pentagon, who have assigned lady warriors to combatant ships and are bringing them ever closer to combat duty on land.

Though the Army has not assigned girls to the Green Berets yet, the Navy has gone full speed ahead with plans to feminize the maritime vocation. And those who warned against moving women into combat units at sea are having a blast saying, "I told you so." Things aren't shaping up quite the way the boys and girls in River City wanted, unless by shape you mean what happens to a girl who ships out to sea with a few hundred horny men.

Consider just a few of the tawdry tales that washed up on shore earlier this year. As reported in the *Washington Post*, the canoodling between an enlisted man and woman aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* was particularly steamy. The sailors were married, but not to each other, and they reportedly videotaped their liaison that took place on a secluded part of the ship. They got caught when the leading man showed the film to his friends, one of whom turned him in. Man and woman

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were punished, the man a little more harshly.

The article in the *Post* also reported that 38 pregnancies have occurred on the *Eisenhower* since leaving our shores a year ago. How many of these babies have the same father we do not know, but according to the Center for Military Readiness, which keeps track of these gestating problems, the Navy evacuated five pregnant women from the ship in January. And 24 other women, the CMR reports, left the ship before it went to sea last fall.

Things are not going much better for the Army, which is also under feminist siege. In February, CMR revealed that a new Army policy for troops in Haiti required fighting men and women to share quarters. Not surprisingly, an Army man's wife pulled back the covers on the coed tents in a letter to CMR president Elaine Donnelly, a member of the defunct Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. When Donnelly released the letter to Congress and the *Washington Times*, the Army prepared to battle irate wives and husbands who do not like the idea of a spouse sleeping in the same room with a member of the opposite sex.

The distraught woman's letter made several points, including the obvious observation that requiring men and women to share quarters would lead to false charges of sexual harassment and possibly even sexual misconduct. But more important to this Army wife was the question of how long any normal man or woman in such an environment could resist the powerful temptation to commit adultery. "The basic fact that humans have been made with strong sexual desires cannot be overlooked. How long can we reasonably expect men and women not to act on those desires?" she asked in her letter. "Our military spouses give our country sacrificial gifts by willingly being separated from their mates and actively supporting their mission. In return, we must honor this gift by not unnecessarily tempting their spouses or ordering them to live in a manner that they cannot morally approve of. . . . The shock of my spouse sleeping in the same room with the opposite sex morally outraged me."

But those misgivings got short shrift from sympathetic planners in the unisex Army. "They're soldiers," a spokesman barked with the authority of a guard dog from the National Organization for Women. "There's no distinction between male and female." There wasn't any distinction on the Eisenhower either, where Navy policy allowed two crew members to betray their spouses. Adultery, pregnancy, and other misconduct aside, there's another little problem with sending a few women into lonely, harsh conditions with a few thousand men. To the now run-of-the-mill tales of illicit sex, now add the stories of the businesswomen who made a fortune on lonely boys in the Persian Gulf or on Navy vessels.

Titillating as it is, sexual misconduct is just one problem associated with a military overdosing on estrogen. As the *Air Force Times* reported last November, a study on the nature and amount of women's medical care showed that half of 222 women surveyed sought treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. The women, who were crew members of the submarine tender *Frank Cable*, sought medical treatment 16 times more often than men, mostly for orthopaedic problems. But these figures shouldn't be surprising. When the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces gathered testimony from medical experts, it learned that women were more susceptible to stress fractures and other medical problems during strenuous and even routine training and operations because, well, they're women. Predictably, President Clinton and the Pentagon threw the commission's data, all of which showed women were either unsuitable for or incapable of fighting, into the Potomac. Prepare, they said, for an Army and Navy with generals and admirals named Hillary and Chelsea leading men into combat.

In any event, the battle to put women in combat has led to more than pregnancies, porno tapes, and penicillin shots. It's also led to a reign of terror against men who think it is not only un-American but also un-Christian to send women into combat. Navy Lieutenant Commander Kenneth A. Carkhuff, a 1982 graduate of the United States Naval Academy whose fitness reports have been nothing less than exemplary, got the administrative equivalent of a keelhauling for expressing just such an opinion. On August 24, 1994, Carkhuff was commanding a helicopter unit on a drug interdiction operation off the coast of Haiti. Two women were under his command, which prompted Carkhuff to speak his mind. He told his commanding officer he thought it was morally unacceptable to send women into combat and that doing so would conflict with his religious beliefs, a radical view in the 1990's. He expressed his concerns in a private conversation and never said he would disobey an order to send women into combat, but noted that as a Christian he was obliged to say something about the matter. Immediately, Carkhuff's commander removed him from his unit and filed an averse fitness report that said Carkhuff's "stated beliefs are not compatible with further military service." He also tried forcing him out of the Navy. The case is pending.

Military protocol required Carkhuff's commanding officer to remove him from the mission because he clearly stated he could not fully support it. But the move to discharge Carkhuff from the Navy was neither required nor military protocol. It was arbitrary punishment for expressing a strongly held belief. The cliché for this is political correctness. Of course, one must ask how any Christian soldier, as Carkhuff claims he is, could obey any order he considered immoral. Still, his lesson is instructive: if you are a real man, do not join the military.

R. Cort Kirkwood is managing editor of the Arlington Courier *and* McLean Providence Journal, *weekly newspapers in Virginia. He wrote the "Alternative Views" section of the final report of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces.*

JOURNALISM

Driving Mike Royko

by Terry Przybylski

In my essay "Triberalism" in last October's issue of *Chronicles*, which detailed the hijacking of the *Chicago Tribune* in recent years by in-your-face homosexuals and other assorted left-wing counterculture misfits, I noted that there was still at least one *Tribune* writer who had the courage to thumb his nose at his paper's new policy equating a

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predilection for sodomy with heroism: veteran columnist Mike Royko. While the *Tribune* was genuflecting before the April 1993 "Gay Rights March on Washington," Royko pooh-poohed it as the fatuous nonsense that it was. And while the *Tribune* was haranguing President Bill Clinton to repeal the ban on open homosexuals in the military, Royko—one of the few remaining *Tribune* writers who actually served in the military—denounced the plan, calling it "a blue chip in the poker game of gay obsessives" to win total social acceptance. Now, it appears, the gay obsessives are out to make Royko pay for his heresy.

The director of something called the "Illinois Federation for Human Rights" recently demanded that the *Tribune* fire Royko, a living legend in Chicago journalism, for an episode of misbehavior—although not on grounds that would make sense to most people. It all started a week before last Christmas, when Royko drove while intoxicated near his home in the posh Chicago suburb of Winnetka and ran into another car. When police arrived on the scene and arrested him, Royko also struck an officer. (Sort of reminds you of Rodney King, doesn't it?) In May, Royko pleaded guilty to driving under the influence, failing to yield the right of way, and resisting arrest. It was, sadly, far from being his first alcohol-related brush with the law, and the judge stripped Royko of his driver's license for a year, placed him on two years' court supervision, fined him $1,000, and ordered him to perform 80 hours of community service. At his sentencing, Royko, unlike Saint Rodney, was properly contrite, even to the point of thanking the Winnetka police for maintaining their professionalism during his arrest, and promised to fulfill his community service obligation by reading to blind people at a Chicago social service agency.

Most people, no matter how reprehensible they might find drunk driving and punching cops, would probably agree that this does not sound like a man who needs to be fired from his job—but then, Chicago's militant homosexuals and their allies in local politics and the media are not most people. Nearly half a year after the accident, and nearly a month after the sentencing, Rick Garcia, the head of the aforementioned "human rights federation," suddenly demanded that the *Tribune* fire Royko—not for drunk driving, and not for cop-punching, but because Royko during his arrest had reportedly uttered "derogatory terms for homosexuals" to the officers and the ambulance crew! This tidbit of information, which had not previously been brought to public attention by anybody, first appeared in June in the *Windy City Times*, Chicago's official "gay" newspaper. From there, most local TV and radio outlets eagerly snapped it up and ran with it, as did the chief competitor of the *Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The *Tribune* itself stayed mum. "It is a personal matter of Mr. Royko's," mumbled a spokesman for the paper. Rick Garcia would have none of it. If the hellish Royko were allowed to keep his job, Garcia whined to the media horde, "it shows that a bigot can be harbored and can find a position of prominence at the *Tribune*." (During his arrest, Royko also reportedly called one of the officers "a loser" when he noticed that the cop had a surname of Croatian extraction. As of this writing, however, no outraged Croatian-Americans in Chicago have called the *Tribune* to demand that it fire Royko for his "insensitivity" about the Balkan war.)

Most public figures probably would have clammed up in the face of this kind of pile-on; Royko, to his credit, gave it right back. He noted in his column the next day that the reason why he and his wife fled Chicago's swanky "Gold Coast" for Winnetka two years ago was that after he wrote his column supporting the military's "gay ban," members of ACT-UP vandalized his home in the middle of the night, plastering it with stickers which called him a Nazi. As Royko pointed out, he never did get an apology for that criminal attack on his property; nor did the Chicago media take any great pains to publicize the incident, let alone condemn it. And Royko also raised a question which almost nobody else in the local media thought to ask: Exactly how did the *Windy City Times* get its hands on this story? It came, in fact, from the Winnetka police department's official report of the accident—but, as I know from personal experience as a reporter who covered suburban Chicago police departments, the cops rarely if ever publicize such information. And certainly the *Windy City Times* doesn't send a reporter up to Winnetka each week to leaf through police reports.

So what we had here was an inside job: somebody who had access to the police department and its reports got a copy of Royko's file and relayed it to the *Windy City Times*, which then passed it off to the rest of the Chicago media—and, for good measure, other homosexual publications in New York and San Francisco. As Royko also pointed out, only one other person on the Chicago media scene—conservative radio talk-show host and *Sun-Times* columnist Tom Roeser—thought it relevant to ask who was responsible for leaking the report. The highly knowledgeable and reliable Roeser suspects operatives of Cook County State's Attorney Jack O'Malley—a liberal, "inclusive" Chicago Republican and protégé of former Illinois Governor James Thompson, who has always courted militant homosexuals, radical feminists, minority "activists," and the other usual professional victim groups.

Of course, Royko is not likely to be fired from the *Tribune*, no matter how much the Rick Garcias of the world might whine for it. After all, firing Royko would provoke outrage—and canceled subscriptions—from who-knows-how-many thousands of readers who now buy the paper *only* to read Royko.

Terry Przybylski writes from Des Plaines, Illinois.

LIBERAL ARTS

MOVIN', MOVIN', MOVIN'

"A new film version of *Othello*, to star Lawrence Fishburne as the betrayed [*sic*] Moor of Venice who kills his wife, will offer more 'conversational' dialogue than Shakespeare imagined. . . . First-time director Oliver Parker said the play's dialogue, which gave the English language the phrases 'green-eyed monster' and 'one that loved not wisely, but too well,' needed updating to keep the movie moving."

—*from the* Chicago Tribune, *May 30.*

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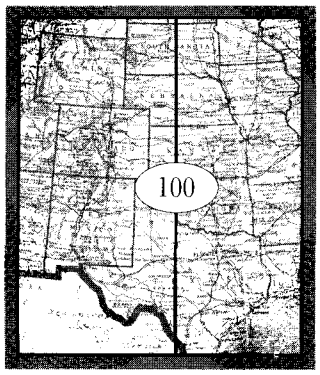
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Circuit Rider

A town without a saloon is like a woman without a heart. I made Blanding, Utah, before sundown, checked into the Best Western Motel, and rang up the front desk from my room. "Is the Elk Ridge Restaurant within walking distance from here?" "It's just half a block away." "Do they have a liquor license?" "To sell liquor? I don't think so. We're a dry town." Not as long as I'm a resident. I had in my luggage a half-bottle of dry red wine, from which I drank a glass before crossing the street to the restaurant. It was a characterless place, furnished with tables and chairs fabricated from blonde wood and crowded with large pale families gorging on fried chicken and sweet rolls. And a meal without wine can only be compared to a Mass without transubstantiation. I ordered chili and a bottle of pseudobeer, ate quickly, and returned to the motel to finish off the wine and immerse myself, through Selina Hastings's superb new biography of Evelyn Waugh, in the bibulous aristocratic world of a London clubman. I was awake before seven the next morning and on the road by eight o'clock, headed south across the northern boundary of the Navajo reservation to the town of Mexican Water in Arizona.

I drove for some hours across the land of the Navajos, fine upland desert almost entirely removed from the Epoch of Growth that the Dineh alternately despise and demand, though the folkways they cherish are virtually synonymous with the poverty of which they complain. Californians enclosed in Cadillacs, Ohioans boxed inside Winnebagos towing boats and jeeps, and yuppies from Utah with mountain bicycles mounted on the roofs of sporty four-wheel-drives raced across this wholly-surrounded Third World plot, past the stick corrals and trailer towns, in search of a good time elsewhere and, if possible, the good life. America on the move: restless and miserable without knowing why, everyone looking for the right place, the last best place, and never finding it; towing their problems along behind them with their boats and assorted wheeled toys. Maryland, Virginia plates: keep going. New York and Illinois: don't stop. Oregon and Washington: the Indians don't need you out here, and neither do we. California: stop and I'll shoot. The oncoming traffic approached like unwanted neighbors, blank alien faces behind reluctant windshields at doubled speed. On the res there are few road signs, little of the roadside culture of the white syphilization that has become an affront to Creation and to the Creator. Here a lovely valley, an expanse of grassy plain, a row of hills covered by desert flowers are not, as they are off reservation, an invitation to rape, pillage, and development: detached from intimations of disaster, natural beauty becomes once again an object of delight, no longer cause for anguish. I wish the Indians owned all of Arizona.



North to south, Arizona stretches 390 miles. Beyond the Painted Desert I stopped for gas at Show Low on the edge of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, a wilderness of blocky mountains and gorges blackened by low forests of pine and cedar. South from Globe, yellow puffs of blossoming palo verde covered the cragged desert hills, and in the valley of the San Pedro River the cottonwoods boiled on a hot wind above the flat green fields overlooked by armies of saguaros. The sprawl of Tucson began at Oro Valley, ill-made but expensive houses crammed into gilded subdivisions isolated behind partial adobe walls from the perfumed vastness of the springtime desert. People move 2,000 miles from Northbrook and Minneapolis to live like *this*? The great unanswered question is not what women want—it is what Americans want. I drove downtown through the rush-hour traffic and put up at the Congress Hotel on State Street, where the art deco lobby has been recently refurbished, the rooms with their Bonnie & Clyde furniture are comfortably Spartan, and the radio encased in its wooden box in the form of a church window had considerately been left inoperable by the management. The window faced State Street, directly over the marquee. I opened it and lay with my boots on across the iron-frame bed while the hot dry air poured in, smelling the cold wet sagebrush of the Wyoming steppes and the yellow branding smoke, acrid with the odor of scorched hair and burnt veal.

I spent two days drinking coffee with Gregory McNamee and a hotshot literary agent whose analysis of the American literary marketplace tempted me to chuck my typewriter into the Santa Cruz River and escape across the Mexican border in search of a better life. On the third day I was cramped once again behind the wheel of the pickup truck, battling the powerful spring winds east of Benson on Interstate 10. Each year this wandering becomes more like an obsessive patrol of the American Southwest, an assessment of the ruination accomplished by "development" and an inventory of the vast and better yet inhospitable beauty still remaining. The highway climbed through Texas Canyon and descended to Willcox and San Simon, scoured by typhoons of yellow dust rising from the desert floor and sweeping across the apple orchards toward the iron-red mountains that enclose the valley. It crossed the state line into New Mexico, passed Stein's Ghost Town, and traversed the playas shimmering with heat. From Lordsburg it continued on to Deming and El Paso, while I took the two-lane road north across the wide plain dotted with sotol and yucca through the Burro Mountains to Silver City on the southern end of the Gila National Forest. The country had emerged from the chrysallis of spring in which it had rested pleasantly when I last visited it in February with Jim Catron, legal counsel to the Catron County Commission notorious nationwide for its determination to force the federal government to obey its own statutes. I had phoned Catron from Belen and met him at six in the morning at his house in Contreras at the verge of the bosque along the Rio Grande for the 160-mile drive to the town of Reserve, the county seat. Jim Catron is a descendent of the pioneers of

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New Mexico, many of whom migrated from the Lower South to Texas after the federal troops and carpetbaggers expropriated them, and later from Texas into New Mexico Territory where they set up in the cattle-ranching business. They were largely of Celtic stock, and some of them, like Jim's ancestors, had an admixture of Cherokee and Choctaw blood; as ex-Confederates, they compounded Celtic rambunctiousness and dislike of authority with a hatred for the federal government in all its works and manifestations. This hatred, passed down from one generation to the next, had not died out in their great-grandchildren when the government in Washington passed a National Environmental Protection Act and sent interlopers to regulate the economy, as well as the environment, of New Mexico. Catron County, larger in area than the state of New Jersey and comprised almost entirely of federal and state lands, has a population of around 2,100 people, most of whom are—or were—cattlemen, timber cutters, and lumbermen, running their animals and cutting their trees mostly on the national forests. As the regulators proceeded with their work, harassing ranchers and forcing the lumber companies into retirement, the citizens of Catron County, growing restless, encouraged their elected officials to the more intensive exercise of their native ingenuity. The strategy these men developed was simple as well as legal, and even patriotic. NEPA plainly states that federal agencies must consult with the governments of affected localities concerning the effects of their activities on local cultures and customs. Because the Forest and the Fish and Wildlife Services were just as plainly *not* engaging in such consultation, their negligence appeared to present an opening for a legal thrust to the soft underbelly of Leviathan. To date Jim Catron has helped to obtain several judgments from federal courts in the West supporting his argument, while relations between federal personnel and environmentalists on one side of the debate, and almost everyone else on the other, have been ratcheted to so great a level of hostility that the commission passed an ordinance requiring heads of households to own firearms in order to "protect citizens' rights," and predicted that "much physical violence" would ensue if the federals persisted with their "arrogant" plan for grazing reform. Long before the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, Catron County had become a symbol of the Revolt of the Redneck, and disapproving media persons were converging on Reserve from more enlightened regions of the country; these included, recently, a dude reporter from the San Francisco office of the *Wall Street Journal* whose chief preoccupation seemed to be keeping his contact lenses in place. The day I sat in on a commissioners' meeting with Jim the trees were in bud around the county building and an elderly couple from California stopped in to watch history being made. Nothing more incendiary than the condition of the county landfill was discussed, but they seemed gratified nevertheless.

Near Bayard I stopped at a roadside tavern and received painstakingly detailed instructions on to Caballo from a drunken cowboy in a black hat at the bar. The highway crossed the lovely Mimbres Valley below the Santa Rita Copper Mine that has been in operation since the 1720's and ascended the west slope of the Black Range by switchbacks to Gallinas Canyon and Emory Pass (elev. 8,228), from where the Caballo Mountains were scarcely visible through the dust blowing across the Rio Grande trench. The steep forest floor was devoid of understorey, even of grass, but greening cottonwoods shaded the canyon above a clear running stream. The long descent began among precipitous cliffs and pine trees, passed through draws where cattle grazed beneath riparian cottonwoods, and ended in the wide creosote plain sweeping down to the big river and Interstate 25 beside it. In spite of fierce winds quartering from the northwest, I reached Belen in time to catch the national news broadcast and a vodka martini with Jim Rauen. The O.J. Simpson trial and the war in Bosnia were still the top stories, and we agreed that it was as if we hadn't missed a beat since I left at the end of February.

The heat was terrific in Juárez two days later. At Figaro's across the Avenida de 16 Septiembre from the Plaza Monumental we were greeted by Señor Hurtado, the ring owner, as we ate fajitas and drank white wine. All six bulls, from the Doña Celia Barbabosa Ranch, were magnificent animals, nearly identical in build and in their dark brindled color and weighing between 450 and 484 kilos. Each of the three matadores had one bad fight, and one superb one: Jorge Gutierrez cut one ear, Mario del Olmo two, and Federico Pizarro, like del Olmo a young man not yet in his 20's, received an indulta from the President. "No, no, Pizarro—no, no!" the crowd roared as he prepared to kill, and Pizarro with an expectant, almost pleading expression looked up to the box lettered AUTORIDAD. The President appeared reluctant, seeming to want the bull Visitante dead, but at last he relented and the spectators, who had just finished admonishing a banderillero who had failed to place a single banderilla with shouts of "Pero! Pero! Pero!" went wild with enthusiasm as Pizarro was lifted on the shoulders of his cronies and paraded around the ring. He neatly folded and slipped into an inner vest pocket a pair of panties flung to him by an admirer, but tossed back the inflated plastic ones thrown by a lout in one of the cheaper seats. When Jim and I arrived in Belen the next day drifts of hailstones from a passing thundershower lay among the grama grass, and at dusk we searched with flashlights for the large desert toads that draw to the pond. When rubbed across the belly they excrete a strong stream of urine, and go limp in your hand with pleasure.

I drove over to Contreras the next morning and found Jim Catron and his sons pouring concrete. The cordless phone hanging on the fence was silent until about noon, after which it rang incessantly. One of the callers was Steve Udall—"one of the good Udalls"—who was going to confront the feds at a hearing in Phoenix, but the rest were women reporters from polite Eastern newspapers. One of them, who seemed to think that she was conversing with a Western badman, complained that Jim "intimidated" her. More or less patiently, he walked them through his little speech. "I was talking to the editor of the *Albuquerque Trib* one time," he said between calls. "Blonde, stringy hair; thin. She kept using the word 'redneck.' Finally I said to her, 'By "redneck" you mean someone who is rural, ignorant, violent, and white, is that correct?' 'That's correct.' Well, there is a word for people who are urban, ignorant, violent, and black. Do you use that word?' 'Of course not!'"

The phone rang again and Jim spoke into it for some time, pacing as he did so around the smoothed concrete. "It won't be very long before New Mexico is no longer a Western state," he said when he got off. "I don't like it."

"I hate it," I told him. c

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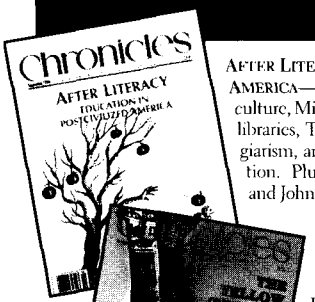
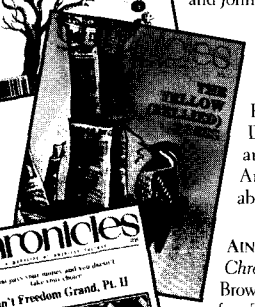
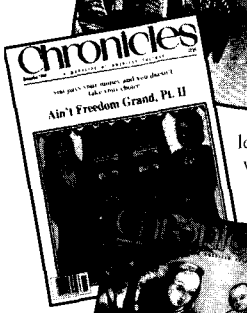


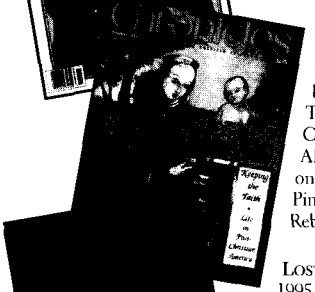
After Literacy: Education in Postcivilized America—September 1994—John Lukacs on civilization vs. culture, Michael Gorman on technovandals and the future of libraries, Theodore Pappas on the nagging problem of plagiarism, and Stephen A. Erickson on the politics of education. Plus Thomas Fleming on the education of liberals, and John Dombrowski on politically incorrect research.



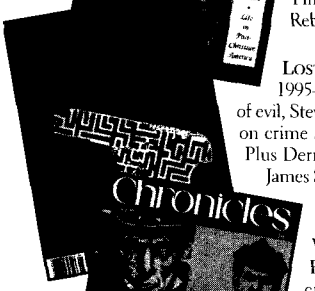
The Yellow (Bellied) Press—October 1994—Philip Jenkins on our free and gutless press, Erwin Knoll on the "liberal" media, Terry Przybylski on the *Chicago Tribune*, Alex N. Dragnich on Yugoslavia and the Western media, and Ewa M. Thompson on Russia and the American press. Plus Samuel Francis on the abortion gambit.



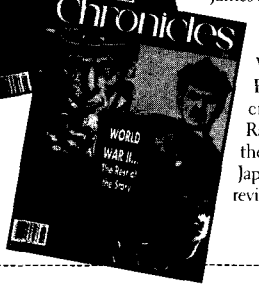
Ain't Freedom Grand, Pt. II—November 1994—*Chronicles* interviews former California governor Jerry Brown, Richard Winger on restricting ballot access, Jeffrey Tucker on the third-party option, and Wayne Allensworth on the religious right. Plus Tomislav Sunic on video politics, and Paul Foster's "Memoirs of a Reagan Hack."



Keeping the Faith: Life in Post-Christian America—December 1994—Philip Jenkins on the radicalism in the Episcopal Church, Thomas Fleming on the case for religious boycotts, Thomas Molnar on the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and John Patrick Zmirak on AIDS and the wrath of God. Plus Jacob Neusner on the left's hijacking of Judaism, and Sanford Pinsker on affirmative action and the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

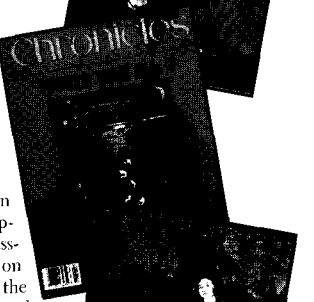


Lost in the Maze: Crime in America—January 1995—Philip Jenkins on serial murder and the nature of evil, Steven Goldberg on black murder, Thomas Fleming on crime and welfare, and Samuel Francis on globo-cop. Plus Derrick Turner on Britain's immigration crisis, and James Scruton on Peter Davison's study of Boston poets, *The Fading Smile*.

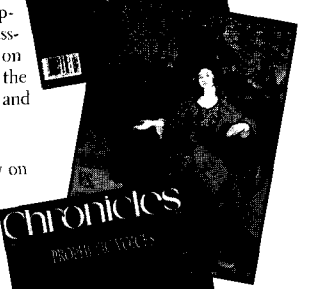


World War II: The Rest of the Story—February 1995—Anthony Harrigan on Allied war crimes, George Watson on Alfred Rosenberg, Ralph de Toledano on Russian collaboration with the Nazis, and Ralph Walker-Willis on the 442nd Japanese-American regiment. Plus Paul Gottfried's review of David Frum's *Dead Right*.

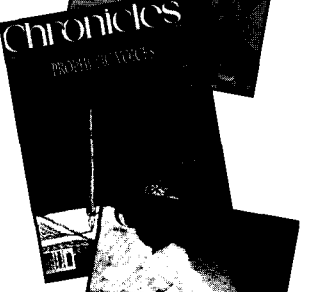
Turning Rights into Wrongs: The Supreme Court vs. the Bill of Rights—March 1995—William J. Quirk and R. Randall Bridwell on the evils of judicial review, Jerry Woodruff on the assault on the Second Amendment, Ronin Colman on the drive for state sovereignty, and Christopher Baldwin on jury-rigging. Plus Samuel Francis on Charles Murray's and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*.



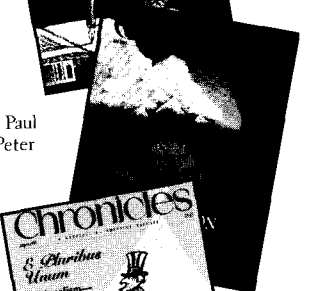
World War III's?—April 1995—Alex N. Dragnich on the fate of Kosovo, Wallace Kaufman on the trials of Kazakhstan, Eva M. Thompson on politics in the Eastern Bloc, and Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., on American imperialism. Plus Momcilo Selic's "Letter From Bosnia."



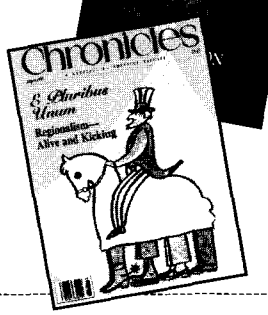
Men vs. Women—May 1995—George Watson on the death of feminism, Mark Racho on the disappearance of the lady, Clay Reynolds on sexual harassment in the academy, and Thomas Fleming on "What do women want?" Plus Laurie Morrow on the film *Little Women*, and John Lofton on Madonna and Norman Mailer.



Prophetic Voices—June 1995—Wendell Berry on the country writer, Gore Vidal on political rhetoric, Thomas Fleming on Ford Madox Ford, Stacey Kors on poet Peter Russell, and Paul Lake on Frederick Turner. Plus Max Oelschlaeger on sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson, and student reports on the perverse and political.



Immigration and the American Identity—July 1995—Murray Rothbard on the American identity, E. Christian Kopff on America's classical heritage, Harold O.J. Brown on our Christian tradition, and Hans-Hermann Hoppe on the consequences of forced integration. Plus Thomas Fleming on the immigration catastrophe, and Paul Craig Roberts' review of *Alien Nation* by Peter Brimelow.



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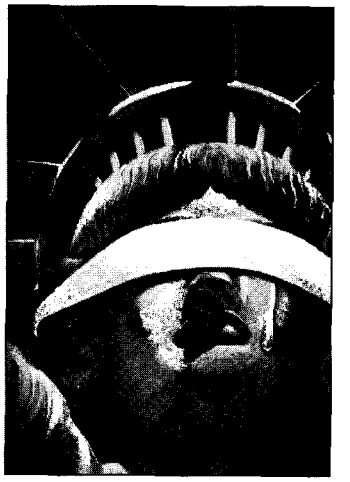

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